



THE

JAMES BENNETT PRYOR

COLLECTION

January 25, 1996 • Los Angeles, CA



AUCTIONS BY BOWERS AND MERENA, INC.

PRICES REALIZED

THE

JAMES BENNETT PRYOR

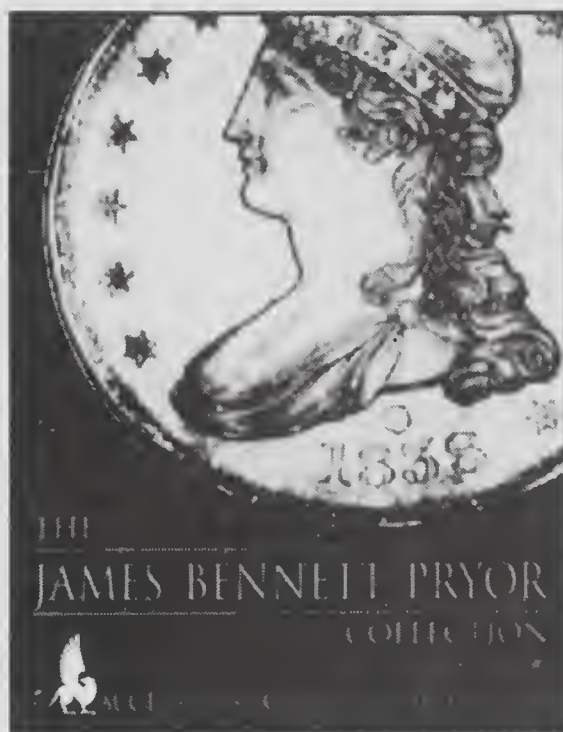
COLLECTION
JANUARY 25, 1996



1838-O 50¢ Proof-63
\$104,500



1855-S Arrows 50¢
\$72,600



1878-S 50¢
\$70,400



1919-D 50¢
\$59,400

James Bennett Pryor Sale Breaks Many Records Prices Soar at Bowers and Merena Event

The sale of the James Bennett Pryor Collection of U.S. half dollars, conducted by Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc., in Los Angeles, drew numerous mail bids prior to the sale, and was well attended by many enthusiastic buyers. The one-session sale realized nearly \$2 million (all figures quoted here include the 10% buyer's fee).

The Pryor Collection is widely regarded as one of the finest cabinets of U.S. half dollars ever assembled, with

special emphasis on Liberty Seated issues, but also with significant—indeed, remarkable—pieces in the Draped Bust, Capped Bust, Barber, Liberty Walking, and commemorative series. Mr. Pryor demonstrated impeccable taste and excellent judgment in the selection of the coins which he included in his collection, and accordingly many pieces realized prices far in excess of expectations based on the technical grade alone.

Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price
1	4620.00	10	2640.00	19	3080.00	28	5060.00	37	1210.00	46	3300.00	55	3520.00
2	3630.00	11	1870.00	20	3520.00	29	17600.00	38	880.00	47	2200.00	56	2750.00
3	1595.00	12	33000.00	21	1760.00	30	4400.00	39	4070.00	48	3410.00	57	1512.50
4	3520.00	13	5775.00	22	14300.00	31	4840.00	40	5500.00	49	3300.00	58	1760.00
5	7700.00	14	6325.00	23	715.00	32	5500.00	41	6050.00	50	3960.00	59	2860.00
6	2970.00	15	3080.00	24	2420.00	33	10670.00	42	1760.00	51	3740.00	60	3300.00
7	1320.00	16	35200.00	25	2420.00	34	3300.00	43	2860.00	52	1760.00	61	1210.00
8	16500.00	17	10450.00	26	3300.00	35	3190.00	44	6600.00	53	2530.00	62	1650.00
9	2530.00	18	3850.00	27	5775.00	36	1760.00	45	1760.00	54	990.00	63	4840.00
												64	550.00
												65	5500.00
												66	5280.00
												67	4510.00
												68	3520.00
												69	4840.00
												70	4180.00
												71	3410.00
												72	1540.00

Prices realized include the 10% buyers fee—Lots omitted represent unsold lots known to us as of the sale date.

Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price
73	935.00	132	4180.00	191	4180.00	231	1540.00	271	7975.00	311	2640.00	351	44000.00	411	275.00
74	1100.00	133	1650.00	192	7700.00	232	3630.00	272	1980.00	312	1540.00	352	10175.00	412	522.50
75	6325.00	134	7150.00	193	880.00	233	2640.00	273	19800.00	313	4620.00	353	4840.00	413	22.00
76	2420.00	135	2420.00	194	825.00	234	2090.00	274	4620.00	314	2640.00	354	14300.00	414	385.00
77	770.00	136	550.00	195	1210.00	235	1815.00	275	2200.00	315	1430.00	355	3960.00	415	55.00
78	825.00	137	522.50	196	880.00	236	20900.00	276	605.00	316	5280.00	356	1870.00	416	330.00
79	5280.00	138	3300.00	197	2530.00	237	70400.00	277	660.00	317	357.50	357	2530.00	417	286.00
80	3300.00	139	1320.00	198	1100.00	238	1320.00	278	4180.00	318	1540.00	358	242.00	418	660.00
81	935.00	140	1815.00	199	1540.00	239	715.00	279	440.00	319	1760.00	359	1100.00	419	462.00
82	1540.00	141	1870.00	200	1980.00	240	2090.00	280	3080.00	320	7700.00	360	1320.00	420	412.50
83	1540.00	142	2750.00	201	1320.00	241	1430.00	281	715.00	321	1870.00	361	253.00	421	467.50
84	1760.00	143	14300.00	202	1980.00	242	4180.00	282	445.50	322	605.00	362	880.00	422	330.00
85	1980.00	144	4180.00	203	2750.00	243	1210.00	283	1650.00	323	770.00	363	880.00	423	522.50
86	3300.00	145	2860.00	204	39600.00	244	880.00	284	5500.00	324	1980.00	364	352.00	424	4180.00
87	4730.00	146	1045.00	205	1760.00	245	1760.00	285	825.00	325	605.00	365	352.00	425	2310.00
88	990.00	147	7975.00	206	2200.00	246	3080.00	286	2420.00	326	687.50	366	385.00	426	550.00
89	1320.00	148	9900.00	207	242.00	247	2090.00	287	8250.00	327	770.00	367	165.00	427	3410.00
90	36300.00	149	12100.00	208	35200.00	248	852.50	288	2310.00	328	660.00	368	385.00	428	137.50
91	2475.00	150	8800.00	209	1650.00	249	770.00	289	4510.00	329	20900.00	369	1870.00	429	88.00
92	770.00	151	72600.00	210	467.50	250	742.50	290	5060.00	330	20900.00	370	385.00	430	1650.00
93	2970.00	152	13200.00	211	1540.00	251	660.00	291	550.00	331	20900.00	371	880.00	431	264.00
94	104500.00	153	4620.00	212	3740.00	252	715.00	292	14300.00	332	440.00	372	247.50	432	550.00
95	4400.00	154	1100.00	213	6875.00	253	4620.00	293	11550.00	333	3960.00	373	121.00	433	148.50
96	1650.00	155	1320.00	214	23100.00	254	1540.00	294	3850.00	334	1980.00	374	242.00	434	110.00
97	4620.00	156	467.50	215	770.00	255	660.00	295	1540.00	335	357.50	375	187.00	435	154.00
98	3080.00	157	825.00	216	10175.00	256	550.00	296	3850.00	336	495.00	376	770.00	436	99.00
99	2860.00	158	17600.00	217	1320.00	257	16500.00	297	825.00	337	4180.00	377	154.00	437	935.00
100	3740.00	159	2200.00	218	2310.00	258	1320.00	298	467.50	338	6875.00	378	99.00	438	302.50
101	1870.00	160	880.00	219	11000.00	259	24200.00	299	4840.00	339	9350.00	379	880.00	439	467.50
102	3960.00	161	2310.00	220	4950.00	260	1540.00	300	7150.00	340	935.00	380	660.00	440	1705.00
103	4620.00	162	4950.00	221	2310.00	261	715.00	301	2970.00	341	7700.00	381	154.00	441	110.00
104	2530.00	163	3960.00	222	15400.00	262	1650.00	302	935.00	342	5500.00	382	660.00	442	880.00
105	2970.00	164	1320.00	223	22000.00	263	1870.00	303	1650.00	343	4180.00	383	308.00	443	1045.00
106	11000.00	165	6600.00	224	770.00	264	4840.00	304	11550.00	344	59400.00	384	132.00	444	242.00
107	6600.00	166	495.00	225	1540.00	265	577.50	305	522.50	345	12100.00	385	198.00	445	385.00
108	1320.00	167	2640.00	226	1375.00	266	1100.00	306	357.50	346	7975.00	386	660.00	446	660.00
109	3080.00	168	1540.00	227	1540.00	267	4620.00	307	2860.00	347	12100.00	387	110.00	447	2200.00
110	2420.00	169	825.00	228	7425.00	268	7150.00	308	1100.00	348	6875.00	388	181.50	448	302.50
111	660.00	170	396.00	229	2640.00	269	962.50	309	2530.00	349	5280.00	389	467.50	449	242.00
112	3520.00	171	990.00	230	220.00	270	8525.00	310	3630.00	350	14300.00	390	176.00	450	357.50
113	4180.00	172	2530.00	<div>Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc.</div> <div>1996 Auction Schedule</div> <div><div>March 21-23</div><div>Baltimore, MD</div><div>The Sebring and Garbe Collections</div></div> <div><div>May 20-22</div><div>New York City</div><div>The Louis E. Eliasberg, Sr. Collection</div></div> <div><div>June 24-25</div><div>New York City</div><div>Now accepting consignments</div></div> <div><div>August 12</div><div>Denver, CO</div><div>The Rarities Sale</div></div> <div><div>Sept. 30, Oct. 1-2</div><div>New York City</div><div>Now accepting consignments</div></div> <div><div>Nov. 14-16</div><div>Baltimore, MD</div><div>Now accepting consignments</div></div>								391	132.00	451	242.00
114	3080.00	173	5775.00									392	154.00	452	440.00
115	1210.00	174	1210.00									393	132.00	453	137.50
116	2200.00	175	3080.00									394	110.00	454	165.00
117	2970.00	176	3025.00									395	176.00	455	1760.00
118	880.00	177	4180.00									396	165.00	456	632.50
119	660.00	178	3300.00									397	110.00	457	242.00
120	330.00	179	2860.00									398	770.00	458	99.00
121	2310.00	180	3190.00									399	118.80	459	148.50
122	7975.00	181	880.00									400	1100.00	460	797.50
123	7150.00	182	1210.00									401	770.00	461	935.00
124	3300.00	183	577.50									402	209.00	462	192.50
125	7425.00	184	1980.00									403	522.50	463	286.00
126	7975.00	185	3300.00									404	1100.00	464	121.00
127	2090.00	186	10175.00									405	2090.00	465	214.50
128	330.00	187	3960.00									406	352.00	466	134.20
129	19800.00	188	2090.00	407	198.00	467	209.00								
130	1650.00	189	3080.00									408	1980.00	468	187.00
131	1760.00	190	2640.00									409	495.00	469	440.00
												410	495.00		

Prices realized include the 10% buyers fee—Lots omitted represent unsold lots known to us as of the sale date.

THE

JAMES BENNETT PRYOR

COLLECTION

*United States Half Dollars
1794-1963*



1855-S LIBERTY SEATED HALF DOLLAR
LOT 151

AUCTIONS BY BOWERS AND MERENA, INC.

January 25, 1996 Los Angeles, California



ABOUT THE COVER

The Atwater specimen of the famous 1838-O Capped Bust half dollar rarity.
This choice Proof is featured as Lot 94 in the present sale of The James Bennett Pryor Collection.

Photo by Doug Plasencia

Copyright ©1995 by Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc. All rights reserved.

Auctioneers: John S. Babalis — Q. David Bowers — Raymond N. Merena

COLOR PLATE I

1 8 12 14

16 17 22 29 30

31 32 33 55 60

63 65 69 70 79

1

8

12

14

16

17

22

29

30

31

32

33

55

60

63

65

69

70

79

COLOR PLATE II



80



87



90



94



95



97



106



107



109



113



123



125



126



129



134



143



144



147



148



149



150



151



1856



152

COLOR PLATE III



COLOR PLATE IV



273



284



288



289



292



293



299



300



304



329



330



331



339



344



345



346



347



348



350



351



353



354



440



THE SESSION

Renaissance Ballroom I, Renaissance Hotel

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 26

6:30 PM Sharp

LOT VIEWING

International Room A&B

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

11:00 AM — 7:00 PM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

9:00 AM — 1:00 PM ♦ 2:00 PM — 7:00 PM

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

9:00 AM — 1:00 PM ♦ 2:00 PM — 5:00 PM

LOT PICK-UP

International Room A&B

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

9:00 AM — 10:30 AM

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

9:00 AM — 10:30 AM

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS & INFORMATION:

We strongly recommend that our clients who intend to view a large portion of the sale, plan to do so as early in the lot viewing schedule as possible.

LOCATION

Los Angeles Renaissance Hotel, 9620 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045
Telephone (310) 337-2800

When making your room reservations, please ask for the special Bowers and Merena rate.

Prices Realized: For prices realized after the sale, call (603) 569-5095, Extension 98.
Limit: 10 lots per caller.

BOWERS AND MERENA AUCTION SCHEDULE



MARCH 21-23, 1996

Baltimore, MD

in conjunction with the Suburban Washington/Baltimore Convention
Now accepting consignments!

MAY 1996

Date and location to be announced.
Now accepting consignments!

AUGUST 12, 1996

Denver, CO

Now accepting consignments!

SEPTEMBER 4-6, 1996

New York City, NY

Now accepting consignments!

NOVEMBER 14-16, 1996

Baltimore, MD

in conjunction with the Suburban Washington/Baltimore Convention
Now accepting consignments!

PLUS:

Many more sales in 1997 and onward!

AUCTIONS BY BOWERS AND MERENA, INC.

Box 1224 ♦ Wolfeboro, NH 03894

Toll-free (800) 458-4646 ♦ In NH: 569-5095 ♦ Fax: (603) 569-5319

THE BOWERS AND MERENA ORGANIZATION

Chairman of the Board, Q. David Bowers
President, Raymond N. Merena



AUCTION DEPARTMENT

Richard A. Bagg, Ph.D., *Director*
Andrew W. Pollock III, *Professional Numismatist*
Frank Van Valen, *Professional Numismatist*
Beth O. Piper, *Numismatic Associate*

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Mark Borckardt
Q. David Bowers
Raymond N. Merena
Andrew W. Pollock III
Frank Van Valen

LICENSED AUCTIONEERS

John S. Babalis
Q. David Bowers
Raymond N. Merena

Appreciation is extended to the following for the preparation of this catalogue:

The present catalogue descriptions are by Frank Van Valen, Andrew Pollock III, Q. David Bowers, Raymond N. Merena, and Mark Borckardt, coordinated by Richard A. Bagg and Beth Piper.

Catalogue production and typography represents the work of the Bowers and Merena Graphics Department, including: Jennifer Meers, Robin Edgerly, Roberta French and Bill Nicholson. Photography is by Doug Plasencia.

All illustrations are of the actual items being sold.

AUCTIONS BY BOWERS AND MERENA, INC.

Box 1224 ♦ Wolfeboro, NH 03894

Phone: (603) 569-5095 ♦ Fax: (603) 569-5319

Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc.

Cataloguing and certain other services were provided by special arrangement with Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc.

ADMINISTRATION

John S. Babalis, *Manager*
Cynthia LaCarbonara
Donna A. Badeau
Carolyn Craigie
Maggie Kettler
Tricia Toepper
Rosalie Minnerly

DIRECT SALES DEPARTMENT

Mark Borckardt, *Senior Numismatist*
Chris Karstedt, *Marketing Director*
Gail Watson, *Sales Director*

ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT

Donald H. Snyder, C.P.A., *Controller*
Laurel A. Morrill
Natalie Smith

PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Mary Tocci

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT

Jennifer Meers, *Manager*
Robin Edgerly
Roberta French
Bill Nicholson

PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

Doug Plasencia, *Manager*

TERMS OF SALE



1 This is a public auction sale conducted by licensed and bonded auctioneers. All bids are to be per lot. No lots will be broken. Lots will be sold in numerical sequence unless the auctioneer otherwise directs. In the event of identical bids on the same lot, the lot will be awarded to the first bid received. In the event of a dispute during the floor bidding, the auctioneer's decision to award the lot to a bidder will be final. The auctioneer, at his sole discretion, may re-open any lot or put the lot up for sale again.

2 A buyer's charge of 10% on each individual lot will be added to all successful bids, which sum will be the purchase price. This buyer's charge will be added to all invoices, without exception. (Under the present arrangement, we normally charge a fee to the seller, plus a buyer's charge to the purchaser.)

3 All sales are strictly for cash in United States funds. All remittances must be drawn on United States banks. **Invoices must be paid for promptly upon receipt in good U.S. funds.** No credit cards will be accepted for auction purchases or deposits. Shipping, handling, postage, private and/or postal insurance, and registration charges will be added for lots delivered by mail. All bidders not furnishing applicable resale permits will be responsible for sales tax as required to be collected under the laws of the state and/or other entity in which the sale is conducted. By bidding in the sale, a successful bidder agrees to be liable for any tax liabilities which may accrue by virtue of the purchase.

4 All lots must be paid in full prior to delivery, unless credit arrangements for this sale have been specifically agreed to in writing by Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc. (subsequently referred to as Bowers and Merena in the present Terms of Sale). Previously established lines of credit, at the sole option of Bowers and Merena, may not be honored. Please contact our Accounting Department in advance if you have any questions regarding your purchasing plans. At the sole discretion of Bowers and Merena, we reserve the right to deny participation in any auction if there have been, in our opinion, credit problems, unreasonable returns, delays in payment, or any other problems in past or current sales. On any account not paid within the prescribed terms of this sale, Bowers and Merena reserves the right to extend credit and to impose periodic finance charges at the rate of 1.5% per month (18% per annum) on the unpaid balance, which charges shall continue to accrue until fully paid. On any sums unpaid, if the account is referred to an attorney for collection, the buyer agrees to pay all costs, including attorneys' fees, with interest accruing on the balance, until fully paid, at the specified rate.

5 Bidders not known to us must furnish references satisfactory to Bowers and Merena and/or deposit a sum equal to 25% of the bids submitted. This sum will be applied to successful bids with the overage refunded

within 10 days of the sale date. Any difference will be billed. We reserve the right to require payment in full by all bidders, prior to the delivery of lots, even if satisfactory references or credit have been established.

6 Title does not pass until lots are paid for in full. It is the responsibility and obligation of the buyer to maintain insurance on any coins in his possession. Risk of loss is on the buyer. By bidding in the sale, the bidder agrees to permit Bowers and Merena to file any financing statement permitted under the Uniform Commercial Code without debtor's signature and to offset any accounts due, whether now or in the future, against funds or collateral in their possession. The buyer agrees not to sell, pledge, or hypothecate these auction purchases until paid for in full. Any person submitting bids on behalf of a corporation or any other entity agrees to be personally responsible for the transaction.

7 No "buy" or unlimited bids will be accepted. No bids will be accepted from minors. The auctioneer and/or Bowers and Merena reserve the right to open a lot at a reasonable price, to set bidding increments as they shall determine, and to refuse any bid which in the judgment of the auctioneer or Bowers and Merena is believed not to be made in good faith or does not qualify by reason of credit, or otherwise. Bowers and Merena may open bidding on any lot by placing a bid on behalf of the seller. Bowers and Merena may further bid on behalf of the seller, up to the amount of the reserve, by placing successive or consecutive bids for a lot, or by placing bids in response to other bidders.

8 All items are guaranteed genuine. Any claim to the contrary must be made in writing within 30 days of the sale date. If notified within that time, we will grant an extension to the buyer so that the question of authenticity can be resolved. In no event will we be responsible for any authentication fees or other charges incurred by the buyers, unless a lot is proven to be not genuine, in which instance we will pay the actual charges incurred, as supported by invoices, up to a maximum of \$50.

9 We cannot be responsible for errors in bidding. Please check your bid sheet carefully. Please bid in even dollar increments. All bids not in even dollar amounts, including those increased by 10% to 20% (see our special service on the bid sheet), will be rounded off to the lower whole dollar amount. We request that all bid sheets be signed, and we reserve the right to not enter bids on any sheet that has not been signed. Realizing that certain bids may be submitted by fax, telegram, or other means without a signature, we note that in any event, bidding in this auction sale constitutes acceptance by the bidder of all of the Terms of Sale.

FOR BEST ATTENTION:

please submit mail and fax
bids by:

**NOON, WEDNESDAY,
January 24, 1996**

10 Auction sales are not approval sales. Any lot may be examined before bidding. **No lot may be returned by a mail bidder without the advance written permission of Bowers and Merena.** Any such requests must be made within three days of the receipt of the coins; in no event can such a request be received by us later than 30 days after the auction date. Any lot returned must be in its original unopened container or holder; the removal of any item from such container or holder negates the return privilege. Any late remittance for purchases is cause for Bowers and Merena to negate this privilege.

11 No lots may be returned for any reason by floor buyers (including those acting as agents for others). In addition, no lots may be returned by successful mail bidders who have examined the lots prior to the sale. Exceptions will be made only for reasons of authenticity, under the provisions of Term No. 8. The auctioneers reserve the right to postpone or cancel the sale without notice, should they in their sole discretion determine that such action is warranted. Any lot may be withdrawn without notice prior to the sale. Neither the auctioneer nor the consignor will have any obligation to the intended bidders as a result of any postponement, cancellation, or withdrawal.

12 Grading is a subjective description that represents the opinion of the cataloguer as to the state of preservation of a particular coin or lot. A split grade, such as Proof-63/65, refers to a coin which in our opinion has a Proof-63 obverse and Proof-65 reverse. "Proof" is used to describe a method of manufacture and is not a grade or condition. All such terms, including adjectival and numerical descriptions of coins and other numismatic items, are the opinion of Bowers and Merena and are not an attribution. No warranty, whether expressed or implied, **including the warranty of merchantability**, is made with respect to such adjectival or numerical descriptions, which can and do vary among experts; nor is any warranty or representation made that any other expert, grading service or other entity will grade a given piece the same as we do; nor is any warranty or representation made that a coin or other numismatic item has not been cleaned, or that the toning of any item is natural, or that there is the absence of any other defect which would render it unsuitable for encapsulation by any grading service or the acceptance by a third party. References to population reports and grading service census figures are as of the cataloguing time, which may be several months prior to the sale date. All such comments are subject to revision; consult recent data issued by the grading services. By bidding in this sale, the buyer agrees to hold Bowers and Merena harmless for any numismatic item graded and described by a third party grading service and presented as any lot within

this catalogue. The buyer further acknowledges that the opinion of Bowers and Merena on any such item may be different than that described by a grading service. Further, the buyer agrees to accept the grade, attribution, pedigree, authenticity or any other designation as described by a grading service. In general, with the exception of those lots described by a grading service, descriptions are the Bowers and Merena interpretation of standards in the *Photograde* book, with the addition of certain intermediate grades, such as MS-64 and Proof-64, as determined by the opinion of our staff.

13 **This paragraph is intended to be part of all lot descriptions contained in this catalogue.** Bowers and Merena act as agents for the consignor. For this reason, no claims of any kind can be considered after the settlements has been made with the consignor. Any dispute after the settlement date (45 days following the date of the sale) is strictly between the bidder and consignor without involvement or responsibility of Bowers and Merena and/or the cataloguers. Bowers and Merena, or any affiliated person or company, reserves the right to participate as a bidder. The auctioneer, consignors, employees, assignees, and agents for Bowers and Merena or the consignors may bid for his or her own account at any auction and may have information not otherwise available to the public regarding reserves, values or other material facts relating to the articles which are the subject of the auction. When an item is sold to the book, it may be sold, passed, withdrawn, returned to the owner or bought in. The consignor or her agent may bid on any lot including those in her own consignment. Certain terms pertaining to this sale and the consignment to it are subject to negotiation. In the event of a typographical error or attribution error, the cataloguer reserves the right to withdraw any item from the sale without notice, to correct the error orally at the sale, or, if discovered at a later date, to refund the buyer's money without further obligation. The maximum obligation of Bowers and Merena to any bidder shall be the sum paid for any lot in dispute. While every effort will be made to properly enter and execute bids received by mail or by other means, Bowers and Merena assumes no liability for any errors in this regard or failure to enter bids.

14 By placing a bid in this sale, you agree that this transaction shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire. Any dispute, claim or controversy (except for non-payment) shall be settled exclusively by binding arbitration under the rules then in effect of the Professional Numismatists Guild, Inc., as if both parties to the dispute were members, at Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, or another suitable location at the option of Bowers and Merena. In the event of non-payment, at its option, Bowers and Merena may refer the matter to the PNG arbitration or elect to proceed judicially, in which case the buyer consents to jurisdiction in the courts of Carroll County, New Hampshire.

FLOOR BIDDER REGISTRATION

will begin 30 minutes before the session at the entrance to the auction room.

NEW BIDDERS

If you have not participated with us before, be sure to send your credit information: **Attn: Don Snyder**, at least 10 days before the auction. There is very little time, if any, to review this information during the auction.

SPECIAL SERVICES

15 If you wish to limit your total expenditure, please fill in the maximum amount you wish to spend on the **MAXIMUM EXPENDITURE** line at the upper portion of your bid sheet. You can then submit bids for amounts up to eight times the amount of the maximum expenditure. This is a personal service and a Bowers and Merena customer representative will personally attend to your bid sheet by bidding from the auction floor, buying lots for your account until your authorized expenditure is reached. While we will do our best in your behalf, due to the speed of the auction sale and the sometimes crowded conditions, we cannot be responsible for failure to execute such a bid properly. Due to the bookkeeping involved, this service is offered only to bidders with maximum expenditures of \$1,000 or more. **MAXIMUM EXPENDITURE** and **ONE LOT ONLY** bidding can be combined.

16 Up to five lots may be grouped with brackets for a **ONE LOT ONLY** purchase, if you wish to purchase only one example of a coin of which several examples appear in the sale. Such lots should be bracketed on your bid sheet. While we will do our best on your behalf, due to the speed of the auction sale and the sometimes crowded conditions, we cannot be responsible for failure to execute such a bid properly.

17 We invite you to take advantage of the optional 10% to 30% increase to help your chance of being a successful bidder. Check the appropriate place on your bid sheet.

18 Bidding in this auction sale constitutes acceptance by the bidder of the foregoing terms of sale.


Please note: Transparent holders in which the auction lots are stored are to facilitate viewing and inspection of the lots and ARE NOT for long-term storage.


IMPORTANT!


- ◆ Credit cards will not be accepted for auction deposits or payments.
- ◆ The Prices Realized list will be published approximately 30 days after the auction.


SUGGESTIONS FOR MAIL BIDDERS


Bidding in our auctions can be an interesting, enjoyable, and a numismatically rewarding experience. Even if you have been bidding in our sales for many years, you may find that some of the following comments will increase your success. In the event that you wish to ask further questions, phone Cynthia LaCarbonara or Tricia Toepper.


 Mail your bid sheet as early as possible. This is particularly important if you are a new bidder, for it takes us time to check your references. A bid sheet mailed a few days before the sale might not reach us until a week later—at which time the coins will have been sold to others!


 As the sale date draws near, fax us your bids anytime 24 hours a day [our fax number is (603) 569-5319]. Or, telephone your bids to our auction department. Please follow up your phone and fax bids with written confirmation.

 We've found it best to use a work sheet to compile bids. In this way you can check back and forth throughout the catalogue, make changes and revisions, and so on. Then when you've decided on your final bids, enter them on the bid sheet. Try your best to keep the bid sheet neat and clearly understandable, listing the lots in order. Check your bid sheet carefully. You will be responsible for any bids on wrong lots or for the wrong amounts. Please, please be careful!

 Don't bid more than you want to pay! Review your financial circumstances carefully before bidding. There is always the possibility that you may be awarded all of the lots you bid on. If you are awarded lots, you are legally bound to pay for them immediately.

 Please keep current price levels in mind when bidding. While high and low prices sometimes occur, most items sell within market ranges. If a popular coin sells for \$500 on the retail market, chances are not good that a bid of, say, less than \$400 will win it. On the other hand, chances are excellent that a bid in the \$500 to \$600 range will be a winner. There is no harm in bargain hunting, but as your time is valuable (and so is ours), it is most productive if you keep current values in mind while bidding. The higher you bid, the greater your chances are for success. It has been our experience that many people who bid strongly, or check the options to increase bids by an optional 10% to 30%, actually purchase at least some lots below their maximum authorization once the sale takes place.

 Ink is best for writing bids. Pencil tends to blur. If bid changes are necessary, do not write over figures. Instead, cross them out completely and re-enter the bids. Put your telephone number on the bid sheet. This way we can call you if there is a question about a bid.

 Lots may be inspected by mail prior to the auction. Please write or call for further information. Mail inspection requests must be received sufficiently early to permit return to us in time for general lot viewing prior to the sale. The person requesting mail inspection agrees to pay postage and insurance both ways and to insure and be responsible for the pieces in his or her possession.

our One Lot Only service and bid on up to five lots and be assured of getting no more than one—or use both features together. Please see points 15 and 16 in the Terms of Sale.

Fax us your bid sheet (any time, 24 hours a day). Our direct fax number is **(603) 569-5319**.

James Bennett Pryor

Numismatist and Friend



James Bennett Pryor as a young man.

It was my privilege to have known Jim Pryor for most if not all of his collecting career, which spanned more than two decades and which was ended by his unfortunate passing at the age of 55 in 1991.

James Bennett Pryor graduated from David Lipscomb College in Nashville, TN, in 1959 with a degree in business, and began working in the printing business with his father. Printing continued to be his specialty for the rest of his life.

A devoted family man, Jim Pryor will be forever loved and remembered by his wife Nancy and his five daughters, Johanna, Barbara, Lisa, Susan, and Stacie. His unique sense of humor continues to be a source of enjoyment at family gatherings where his many amusing exploits are often recalled in great detail. He will be fondly recalled by those who attended his Bible class at the Church of Christ, which he taught for more than 30 years. He was a dedicated student of the Bible, and I can imagine that if his knowledge and enthusiasm for the Word of God paralleled that which he had for coins, those who attended his classes had an extraordinary leader.

In golf, "Q-Ball" (as he was known by many) played with a zero handicap and won numerous tournaments in a five-state area including the Irvin Cobb and West Kentucky Open events. However, his daughter Barbara, who worked closely with us in the presentation of his coin collection in the present volume, noted

that "over the years his interest in golf began to decrease as he became increasingly more involved with his coin collection."

Jim Pryor began to make significant purchases for his coin collection in the 1960s. Typically, he would read all he could find about a certain specialty—Capped Bust, Barber, Liberty Seated, or some other half dollar design type—and then proceed with great care to acquire specimens one by one.

He was not in a hurry. Often he would pass by a very beautiful EF or AU specimen of a rarity and keep his eye open for a Mint State coin. Not just any Mint State piece would do. Even a coin described by the seller as a "gem" might not be gem enough for Jim Pryor.

In his quest to form an outstanding collection of United States half dollars he attended many conventions, was a founder of the Liberty Seated Coin Club, wrote articles and, in time, gave advice to other collectors and even seasoned dealers as to the intricacies of the half dollar series.

I recall that Jim would attend our auction sales, often with his pockets containing an Uncirculated Carson City half dollar or two, or perhaps some early New Orleans Mint issue, and compare it side-by-side with an item about to cross the block. If our coin was even a tiny bit better, chances are good he would buy it.

Coin by coin, year by year, his cabinet grew. At the same time his circle of friends grew as well. While I will forever remember handling his incredible collection of half dollars as presented in the pages to follow, I will remember Jim Pryor even better as a true gentleman, a wonderful person, a numismatist not only of knowledge and expertise, but of warmth and quality.

He will be missed by all who knew him. The hobby of numismatics is finer for his having passed our way.

—Q. David Bowers

Remembering

James Bennett Pryor

1936-1991

by John McCloskey
Editor, *The Gobrecht Journal*

Jim Pryor was one of seven club members who attended the first meeting of Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC) at the American Numismatic Association Convention in Bal Harbour, Florida, in August 1974. The group elected Kam Ahwash president of the club and discussed ways of exchanging information on Liberty Seated coinage.

After a lengthy discussion it was decided that the only way to effectively distribute information on a national level would be to create a newsletter that would be published on a regular basis and sent to interested collectors of Seated coins. It was recognized that the creation of a regular publication would be a difficult and demanding job, but the original group of seven was determined to make it happen. Kam Ahwash indicated that he would gather information for the first issue of the new publication. Jim Pryor owned a printing business in Mayfield, Kentucky, and told Kam that he would print the first issue at his firm and at his expense in order to help LSCC launch its newsletter.

Jim took the responsibility for the design and layout of the first issue and established a format for the *Journal* that has remained virtually unchanged for the past 17 years [now 22 years]. The club owes a deep debt of gratitude to Jim for his willingness to take charge at a time when the club needed his expertise in launching its publication. Jim printed 300 copies of Issue No. 1 of the *Journal* and shipped them to Kam for distribution to the individuals who had expressed an interest in a club dedicated to the study and attribution of the Liberty Seated coinage of the 19th century.

Jim assumed ownership of the Mayfield Printing Company in 1970 and worked in the printing business for the next 20 years. In February 1989,

Jim was diagnosed as having an inoperable brain tumor after experiencing some numbness in his arms and legs. He fought his illness with courage and determination, but his condition continued to deteriorate as the cancerous tumor grew. Jim died on April 11, 1991, leaving a wife and five daughters.

Numismatically, Jim set as his goal to "collect all half dollars, especially Liberty Seated half dollars, in Mint State condition or as close to it as you can get."

He began collecting Liberty Seated half dollars at the Central States Convention in Peoria, Illinois in May 1973. Over the next three years he assembled over 80% of his collection, with most of these being purchased from major auctions. In March 1984, Jim completed his date set of Seated halves with the purchase of a gem Uncirculated 1870-CC half dollar, a coin which had eluded him 11 years earlier at the famous Reed Hawn sale.

In 1987 Jim sent an inventory of his collection to Randy Wiley to help with some "condition census" research he was doing at the time. Randy indicated to me that he was amazed at the scope and quality of the collection that had been listed for him. Almost 90% of the pieces were described as Uncirculated with many pieces being of superior quality. The remaining coins in the collection were listed as AU, with many of these described in the auction catalogues from which they came as being UNC or Choice UNC. Randy feels that Jim's collection of Liberty Seated halves is the finest of its kind ever assembled in regard to quality and completeness.

Jim's friendship, enthusiasm and devotion to the hobby will be greatly missed by all those who had the opportunity to know him.

Reprinted with permission from *The Gobrecht Journal*, Volume 17, No. 51, July 1991.

The James Bennett Pryor Collection of
UNITED STATES HALF DOLLARS
1794 to Date



Introduction

Welcome to our sale of the James Bennett Pryor Collection of United States Half Dollars. Comprising nearly all dates and mintmarks issued from 1794 to the end of the Franklin type, this is quite possibly the highest quality specialized collection of the denomination ever to cross the auction block.

Included are such numismatic landmarks as 1805/4 (nearly Mint State), 1815/2 (Mint State), 1836 Reeded Edge (Mint State), 1838-O (Proof, one of just 20 minted), 1847/6 (Mint State), 1855-S (Mint State), 1866-S No Motto (Mint State), 1870-CC through 1878-CC (all Mint State, an *incredible* display), 1878-S (prooflike gem), 1901-S (superb Mint State), three different 1916 Liberty Walking patterns, 1921-S (superb Mint State), and other rare dates, varieties, and mintmarks, including the finest cabinet of Liberty Seated half dollars ever to be auctioned. The collection lacks just two dates, the 1796 and 1797, for completion by year, 1794-1963.

Jim Pryor was not only a numismatic connoisseur *par excellence*, he was also a gentleman of the highest order. He enjoyed collecting half dollars, and we and other dealers enjoyed having him as a client. He sought the finest, and once a prize specimen was acquired—often after *years* of searching—he enjoyed owning it. Often he would come to one of our sales or to a convention and have with him a group of choice pieces to share and compare.

With one eye on the Pryor Collection and the other on

numismatic posterity, we have endeavored to create a catalogue that will remain for all time a souvenir, a *chef d'oeuvre*, for the half dollar enthusiast and specialist. We are reminded in a way of our specialized catalogue of the John Weston Adams Collection of 1794 Large Cents published in 1982, which has become a classic in the large cent field. It would be difficult to envision anyone seriously interested in 1794 cents who did not possess a copy. The present catalogue of the Pryor Collection is issued in two formats: soft-cover “working copies” for use in bidding in the sale, and Deluxe Hardbound Library Limited Editions with a printed list of patron subscribers, the latter for permanent reference, enjoyment, and, as years go by, wistful contemplation.

The Pryor Collection catalogue is primarily the work of Q. David Bowers and Mark Borckardt, but grateful acknowledgment is given to other Bowers and Merena Galleries staff members including numismatic experts Andrew W. Pollock III and Frank Van Valen and photographer Douglas Plasencia, among many others.

Appreciation is expressed to Nancy (Mrs. James) Pryor and Barbara Pryor for assistance in many ways.

The catalogue begins with a numismatic and historical commentary of the half dollar series followed by the auction offering of the James Bennett Pryor Collection.

Q. David Bowers

Mark R. Borckardt

A History and Appreciation

Importance

In the spectrum of American coinage, half dollars represent one of just two denominations minted with nearly complete continuity from the 1790s to the present time (the other is the cent). And, like cents, half dollars enjoy a wide patronage with numismatists today.

The first United States half dollars were minted in 1794. The Flowing Hair design was produced that year and also in 1795, followed by the Draped Bust obverse, Small Eagle reverse style 1796-1797, examples of which are prime rarities today.

No half dollars were coined with dates 1798 to 1800. In 1801 the half dollar again appeared, with the earlier-used Draped Bust obverse combined with the new Heraldic Eagle reverse, a style used through the first part of 1807.

The Capped Bust design, with lettered edge, by John Reich, was introduced in 1807 and continued until 1836. Examples were struck every year except 1816, when there was a disastrous fire at the Mint, and no silver or gold coins were made. The 1807-1836

series is rich for the number of interesting overdates and other die varieties it contains and, as such, has attracted the attention of many numismatists. Silver dollars were not struck for a long span from 1804 until 1836, and during this era the Capped Bust half dollar reigned as the largest silver coin of the realm. Mintages were large, accounting for the survival of many today.

From 1836 to 1839, two different types of Capped Bust halves with reeded edges were made, the first 1836-1837 with 50 CENTS on the reverse, and the second 1838-1839 with HALF DOL.

Liberty Seated half dollars made their debut in 1839 and were produced continuously until 1891, including in several design variations. Next came Barber half dollars 1892-1915, the highly acclaimed 1916-1947 Liberty Walking motif, the short-lived 1948-1963 Franklin type, and, since 1964, the Kennedy design.

Adding interest to the denomination are several dozen different types and over 140 varieties of commemorative half dollars minted since 1892.

1794-1795

Flowing Hair Obverse



Designed by: Robert Scot

Issue dates: 1794-1795

Composition: 0.8924 part silver, 0.1076 part copper

Diameter: 32.5 mm

Weight: 208 grains

Edge: Lettered FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR

Production mint: Philadelphia

Business strike mintage: 323,144

Proof mintage: None

1794-1795 Flowing Hair Half Dollars

Half dollars of the 1794-1795 years bear the same design as contemporary half dimes and silver dollars.



The Philadelphia Mint as it appeared in the 1790s. Half dollars were struck here from 1794 until the second Mint began operations in new facilities January 1833. Power for strip and planchet preparation and coinage was provided by horses. (From a painting by Edwin Lamasure, the original of which is on display today at the fourth Philadelphia Mint).

The obverse features a small head of Miss Liberty facing right, with flowing hair behind, LIBERTY above, and the date below. Eight stars are to the left and seven to the right.

The reverse illustrates an open wreath enclosing a "small" eagle perched on a cloud, with an open wreath and UNITED STATES OF AMERICA surrounding. The borders of this and other half dollars (until over a century later in 1916) have denticles.

Numismatic Notes

Most often encountered among half dollars of this type are pieces dated 1795, these being about 10 times more plentiful than those dated 1794. Examples of both years are apt to be seen in lower grades, from About Good to Fine. Very Fine coins are scarce, Extremely Fine pieces are scarcer yet, and AU coins are rare. Uncirculated examples are seldom encountered.

As is true of other early issues, these were "workhorse" coins intended for use in the channels of commerce. Few if any pieces were set aside for collectors at the time of issue. Numerous die varieties exist among early half dollars and are described in an excellent book on the subject by Al C. Overton. Half dollars of 1795 exist in two major varieties, those usually seen, with two leaves beneath each wing of the eagle, and the far rarer issue with three leaves (Overton-111).

Pryor Collection Notes

The Pryor Collection 1794 and 1795 (two leaves and the rare three leaves) half dollars are attractive circulated examples.

1796-1797

Draped Bust Obverse, Small Eagle Reverse

Designed by: Robert Scot
Issue dates: 1796-1797
Composition: 0.8924 part silver, 0.1076 part copper
Diameter: 32.5 mm
Weight: 208 grains
Edge: Lettered FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR
Production mint: Philadelphia
Business strike mintage: 3,918
Proof mintage: None

1796-1797 Half Dollars

This design is similar to that of the other silver denominations of the 1796-1797 years. The Draped Bust obverse depicts Miss Liberty facing right, with flowing hair and a ribbon behind her head, her plunging neckline covered with drapery. LIBERTY is above, and the date is below. Varieties of 1796 exist with 15 and 16 obverse stars, while those of 1797 have 15 stars.

The Small Eagle reverse illustrates an open wreath enclosing a small eagle perched on a cloud. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the fraction 1/2 surround.

This design type is not represented in the Pryor Collection.

1801-1807

Draped Bust Obverse, Heraldic Eagle Reverse



Designed by: Robert Scot
Issue dates: 1801-1807
Composition: 0.8924 part silver, 0.1076 part copper
Diameter: 32.5 mm
Weight: 208 grains
Edge: Lettered FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR
Production mint: Philadelphia
Business strike mintage: 1,600,787
Proof mintage: None

1801-1807 Half Dollars

Half dollars minted from 1801 through 1807 continue the Draped Bust obverse motif introduced in 1796. In 1801 the stars were standardized to a count of 13, with seven to the left and six to the right. Miss Liberty appears facing right, her hair flowing behind her head and tied with a ribbon bow. Her low neckline is covered by a gown or drapery. The word LIBERTY is above and the date is below.

The reverse is an adaptation of the Great Seal of the United States and consists of an eagle with a shield on its breast, holding arrows and an olive branch, and with a scroll inscribed E PLURIBUS UNUM in its beak. Above the eagle is an arc of clouds below which is a group of stars. The inscription UNITED STATES OF AMERICA surrounds.

Numismatic Notes

There are no rare dates within the 1801-1807 span, although some varieties are elusive. Nearly all specimens encountered display weakness of striking in one area or another, with the quality of strike becoming lower and lower as the years advanced. Nearly all seen with the dates of 1806 and, particularly, 1807 show weakness. Even a Mint State specimen of 1807, for example, is apt to be very weakly defined in such areas as the rims, the obverse and reverse stars, and parts of the eagle.

Specimens of this type are typically found in grades from Very Good to Very Fine, although Extremely Fine pieces are found with some frequency. AU pieces are scarce, and strictly Mint State coins are rare.

Half dollars dated 1801 and 1802 are considered to be scarcer than the other dates.

The 1805/4 overdate half dollar is one of the most interesting varieties in this date span. Dies were prepared bearing the date 1804, but apparently no 1804 half dollars were produced. The unused 1804 dies were then overpunched with a numeral 5, thus producing 1805/4. Two different 1804 obverse dies were corrected in this manner.

On one reverse die of 1806, the engraver forgot to put the end on the branch stem, thus the eagle's claws are grasping empty air! Varieties such as these lend interest to the series.

Pryor Collection Notes

The Pryor Collection specimens are above average in their striking quality. The scarce 1801 and 1802 dates are both Extremely Fine, the latter with a pedigree from the Garrett Collection.

The 1805/4 O-101 is a lustrous AU and is far finer than usually seen. Indeed, EF would be an outstanding grade. Other issues are of a high order of quality, with the remarkable gem Mint State 1806 Pointed 6, Stem Through Claw, O-120, being the capstone.

1807-1836

Capped Bust Obverse, Lettered Edge



Designed by: John Reich

Issue dates: 1807-1836

Composition: 0.9824 part silver, 0.1076 part copper

Diameter: 32.5 mm

Weight: 208 grains

Edge: Lettered FIFTY CENTS OR HALF A DOLLAR

Production mint: Philadelphia

Business strike mintage: 82,339,124

Proof mintage: 200 to 300

1807-1836 Capped Bust Half Dollars

In 1807 the Capped Bust obverse design was introduced. The design is by John Reich, a German immigrant whose father was also an engraver. The John Reich Collectors Society (JRCS), publisher of the *John Reich Journal*, pays tribute to his memory and devotes itself to the study of his coinage (plus occasional forays into earlier issues as well).

On the Capped Bust half dollar Miss Liberty faces left. She wears a cap secured at the base with a ribbon or band inscribed LIBERTY, with tresses falling to her shoulder. Her low neckline is draped in a cloth or a gown and is secured by a brooch on her shoulder. Seven stars are to the left and six are to the right. The date is below.



The cornerstone of the second Philadelphia Mint was laid on July 4, 1829, and the facility opened in January 1833. Designed by William Strickland, the impressive building was fronted with Ionic columns and followed the style of a Greek temple on the Ilysus River near Athens. Capped Bust, lettered edge half dollars were struck here from 1833 onward. In March 1836 steam was introduced as the motive power for operations. This mint produced all of the Liberty Seated half dollars as well as early Barber halves, until the third Philadelphia Mint opened in 1901.

The reverse depicts an eagle perched on an olive branch and holding three arrows, with E PLURIBUS UNUM above on a scroll and UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 50 C. surrounding. This same general motif was used on other silver and gold denominations of the era.

Silver dollars were minted from 1794 to 1804, after which no examples were made for circulation until 1836, in which year 1,000 were struck, followed by 600 in 1837 (from 1836-dated dies) and 300 in 1839. It was not until 1840 that silver dollar production resumed in appreciable quantities. During the intervening years the silver half dollar was the main coin used in the channels of commerce for transactions of medium size.

Numismatic Notes

Although there are a number of scarce varieties in the 1807-1836 range, most dates and overdates are readily obtainable. Specimens of most issues are typically encountered in grades from Fine to Extremely Fine, with some of the earlier dates in the range, 1807 through 1820, sometimes seen in Good to Very Good preservation. AU pieces are not difficult to find, especially of dates in the late 1820s and 1830s. Uncirculated coins, particularly ones in higher ranges of that category are elusive, with superb pieces being rare. The Pryor Collection is almost completely Mint State and is truly remarkable for its quality.

There are more overdates in the Capped Bust half dollar series than among coins of any other single design type in American numismatics. Some of these are rather subtle, if not downright confusing, as in the so-called "1824 over various dates," in which the last digit seems to be over a previous 2 plus a previous 0, and,

perhaps another number or two as well. Other overdates are very bold; witness the 1817/3 and the 1820/19. The 1815 occurs only in overdate form, 1815/2, and is a key date in the series.

There are a number of Mint engraving goofs in the series. One of the most interesting is a variety of 1813 in which the engraver punched UNI in the die at the bottom, and then covered it up by overpunching the correct 50C. For good measure, there is the 1814 with E in STATES over an earlier erroneous A (STATES over STATAS). As can be seen also with half dollars of 1795 and 1806 and \$5 gold pieces of 1795, it was not easy to spell STATES in the early days! Perhaps, it was a case of having too much rum on hand (a liquid said to have been in good supply in the Philadelphia Mint).

Among later die blunders the 1836 with 50 C. over 00 C. is remarkable.

Pryor Collection Notes

In a word the quality of James Bennett Pryor's Capped Bust half dollars is *incredible*. Indeed, it far outdistances the quality and importance of any other date and overdate set ever to be offered for auction competition.

Mint State is the order of the day, with minor exceptions. Many of the Mint State coins are gems. The rarest date of the type, the 1815, is a superb example.

1836-1837

Capped Bust Obverse, Reeded Edge 50 CENTS Reverse



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht

Issue dates: 1836-1837

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30 mm

Weight: 206.25 grains

Edge: Reeded

Production mint: Philadelphia

Business strike mintage: 3,631,020

Proof mintage: Fewer than 40

1836-1837 Capped Bust Half Dollars

In 1836, steam-powered presses were introduced to the Philadelphia Mint, and one of the first things to be struck using these devices was the new half dollar format. John Reich's Capped Bust style was modified by Mint engraver Christian Gobrecht. The result was a coin of smaller diameter, with reeded instead of lettered edge. The obverse displays the older Capped Bust design of Miss Liberty facing left, wearing a cloth cap with a band

inscribed LIBERTY, with tresses falling to her shoulder, and with her bosom draped in a gown secured by a brooch. Six stars are to the left and seven to the right. The date is below.

The reverse depicts an eagle perched on a branch and holding three arrows with UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above and the denomination expressed as 50 CENTS below.

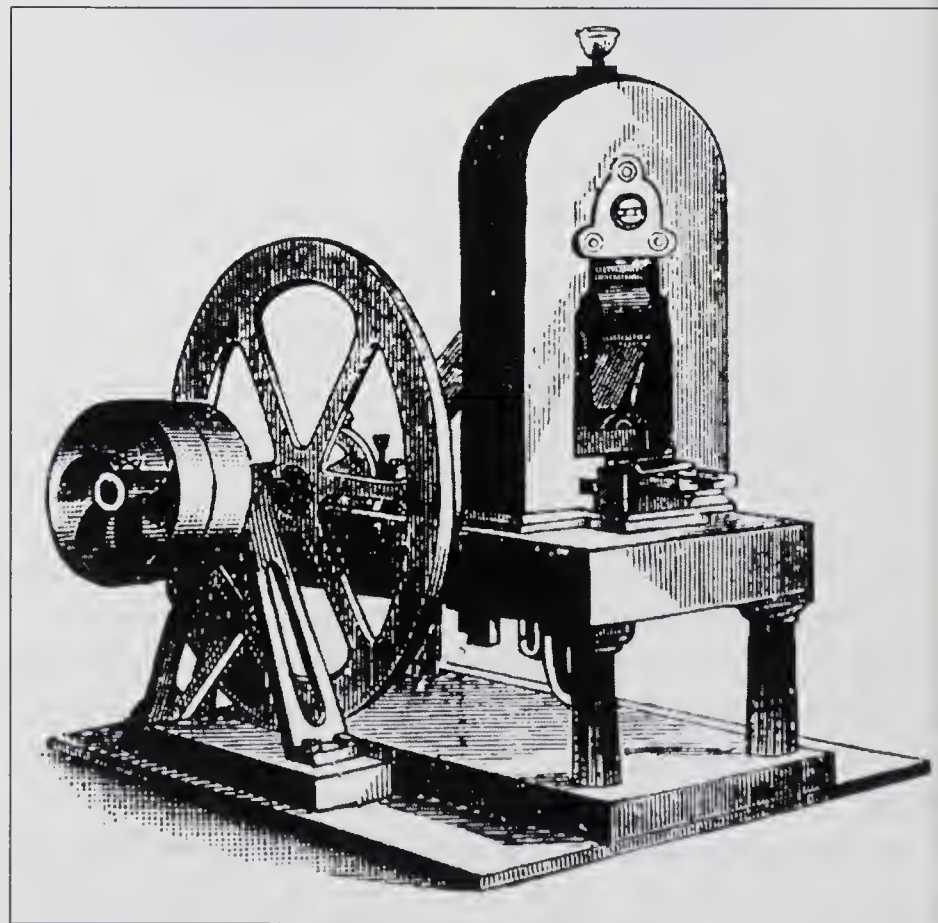
Numismatic Notes

1836 half dollars of the reeded edge format were produced to the extent of just 1,200 pieces and are rare in all grades today. As this design was not adopted until January 18, 1837, the 1836 coins can be considered patterns. However, *de facto* they are regular issues inasmuch as nearly all were placed into circulation by the government. Moreover, nearly all were business strikes (with frosty, lustrous fields), indicating they were intended for circulation. The typical grade encountered is VF to EF. AU coins with lustre are rare, and full Mint State coins are especially difficult to locate.

1837 half dollars were minted to the extent of 3,629,820 and are relatively plentiful today in grades from Good through Extremely Fine. AU coins are scarce, and strictly Uncirculated pieces are scarcer yet. Superb Uncirculated coins such as the Pryor specimen are rare.

Pryor Collection Notes

The 1836 Reeded Edge half dollar is a remarkable and very rare Mint State example. The 1837 is a gem.



The first steam press, shown above, was built by Merrick, Agnew & Taylor and was installed at the Philadelphia Mint in March 1836. Later in the year it was employed to strike 1836 Reeded Edge half dollars. This press, measuring about five feet high, continued in use for many years and was rebuilt and improved in 1858.

1838-1839

Capped Bust Obverse, Reeded Edge HALF DOL. Reverse



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht
Issue dates: 1838-1839
Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper
Diameter: 30 mm
Weight: 206.25 grains
Edge: Reeded
Production mints: Philadelphia, New Orleans
Business strike mintage: 5,117,972
Proof mintage: Fewer than 50

1838-1839 Capped Bust Half Dollars

In 1838 the Capped Bust half dollar was restyled slightly, and the denomination on the reverse, earlier given as 50 CENTS, was revised to HALF DOL. Certain other changes were affected in the thickness of the reverse letters and the details of the eagle.

For the first time, half dollars were struck at a branch mint, New Orleans. The 1838-O half dollar is one of America's prime rarities. It is believed that just 20 were struck (in early 1839), nearly all of which had prooflike surfaces.

Later in the year a more generous mintage of 178,976 half dollars dated 1839 occurred at New Orleans. Nearly all received extensive circulation. Mint State examples are seldom seen.

Numismatic Notes

The type set collector will probably seek an example of the 1838 or 1839 Philadelphia issue, each of which was minted to the extent of more than a million. Examples are readily available in grades from Very Good through Extremely Fine. AU coins are scarce, and Uncirculated pieces are scarcer yet. Superb Uncirculated coins are very rare and are seldom seen or offered for sale.

The aforementioned low-mintage 1838-O is one of America's prime rarities. About a dozen can be accounted for today. It is likely that these were made as presentation pieces, not as coins for circulation. Virtually all (if not completely all), have prooflike or Proof surfaces.

Pryor Collection Notes

This short-lived type is highlighted by an attractively toned Proof specimen of the famous 1838-O, a coin with a long and illustrious pedigree, as one of the most desirable examples of the few remaining. Its cousin, the 1839-O, is a lovely Mint State example.

The 1838 and 1839 Philadelphia Mint coins are gems.

1839-1866

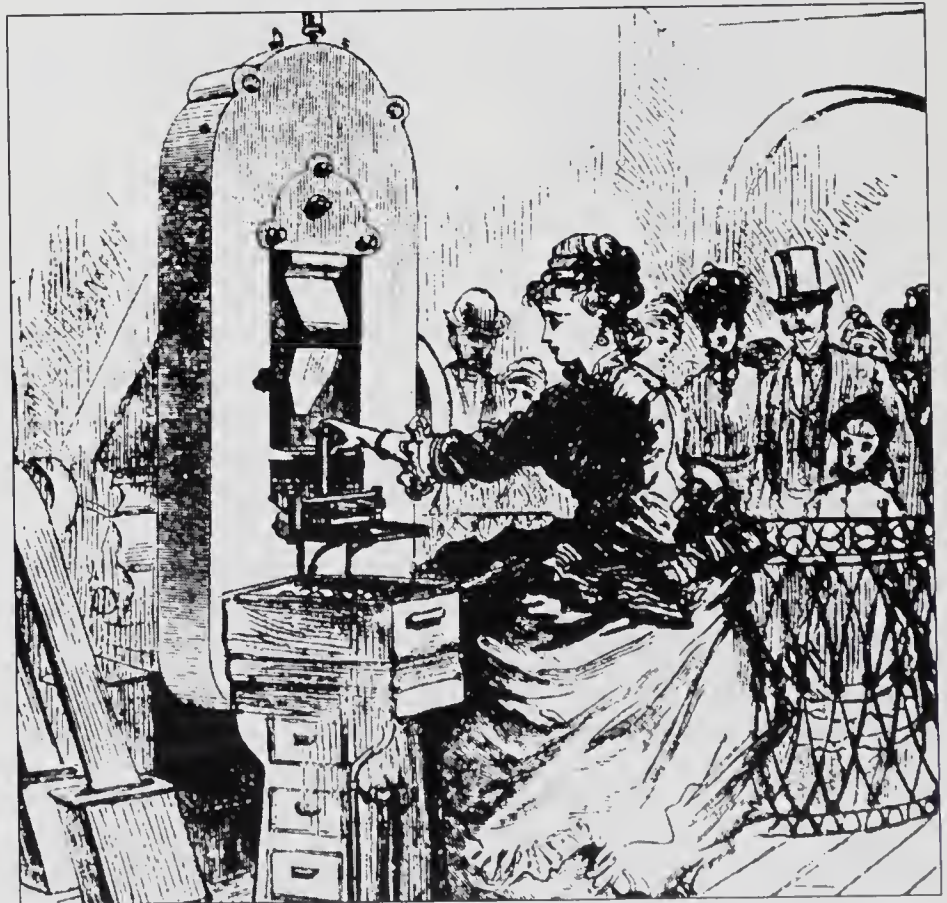
Liberty Seated, No Motto



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht
Issue dates: 1839-1866
Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper
Diameter: 30.6 mm
Weight: 206.25 grains 1839-1853; 192 grains later
Edge: Reeded
Production mints: Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco
Business strike mintage: 76,238,285
Proof mintage: Fewer than 5,500

1839-1865 Liberty Seated Half Dollars

The Liberty Seated motif, without motto (IN GOD WE TRUST) on the reverse, was minted in the half dollar series from 1839 through 1866. Certain pieces dated 1853 and all dated 1854 and 1855 have arrows at the date and are different types, as discussed in the following section.



Striking coins at the Philadelphia Mint circa 1861. Visitors were allowed to watch the proceedings from behind an iron railing. The lady press operator fed planchets from a wooden drawer into a brass tube (by her right hand), after which they would be fed one at a time into the dies, then injected into a bin (at the lower left of the press near the floor; not shown here).

The obverse depicts Miss Liberty seated on a rock, holding in her left hand a Liberty cap on a pole and in her right hand a shield inscribed LIBERTY. Thirteen stars are above, and the date is below.

The reverse is similar to the preceding and consists of an eagle perched on an olive branch and holding three arrows, with UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above and HALF DOL. below.

Numerous variations exist throughout the series, including the absence of drapery from Miss Liberty's elbow on certain 1839 issues, different sizes of reverse lettering (made larger beginning in 1842), and different date numeral sizes.

Numismatic Notes

While there are some scarce issues within this early span in the Liberty Seated series, there are enough common varieties that the numismatist seeking but a single coin to add to a type set will have no difficulty acquiring examples in grades from Good through Extremely Fine. AU coins likewise appear with frequency. Uncirculated pieces are scarcer, and superb Uncirculated coins are quite rare. The quality of striking is apt to vary from issue to issue, with those made in New Orleans often being lightly struck, particularly on the obverse stars.

The 1839 half dollar comes with and without drapery at the elbow. The without-drapery version is in strong demand as the first variety of the series, and also as an issue considered to be a separate type by many. As is the case with so many early types, one can create various sub-types such as this, within major series. In the same vein, halves of 1839-1842 have small lettering on the reverse, and halves of 1842 and later have larger lettering. 1842 half dollars exist both ways.

The 1842-O Small Date is considered to be scarce in all grades and a great rarity in EF or finer preservation.

Perhaps no better testimonial to the spectacular appearance of the 1844-O Double Date can be given than to note that when Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert selected a cover illustration for their book, *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars*, this variety was depicted. The 1844-O Double Date is moderately scarce in all grades, and quite rare in AU or finer preservation.

The 1845-O without drapery (and a few other post-1839 halves without drapery), does not constitute a reversion to the 1839 no-drapery design. Rather, they represent dies that were ground down or resurfaced, and in the process the drapery feature was removed. Thus, they are accidental rather than intentional.

The year 1846 was a watershed time in the half dollar series, and several notable varieties were issued. Perhaps the most memorable is the 1846 over horizontal 6, for which the Mint engraver first punched the last digit of the date *sideways*, then recognized his gaffe and corrected it! Small Date and Tall Date varieties also exist for this year.

Over a span of a century or more, several superb collections of half dollars have been formed. A characteristic of nearly all—the

Pryor Collection excepted—is that they have lacked an example of that rarity of rarities, the 1847/6 overdate.

San Francisco half dollars of the 1855-1866 era, while most are not rarities, certainly are scarce in all grades. In Mint State they are indeed rare; this is particularly true of pieces dated in the 1850s.

The 1866-S without motto is very elusive, and in Mint State the Pryor Collection coin is exceedingly rare. 1866-S coins without motto were made in four American series: the half dollar, \$5 gold, \$10 gold, and \$20 gold.



The 1861-O half dollar is of interest, as in this year the New Orleans Mint was operated by three entities: the Union or federal government, the state of Louisiana, and the Confederate States of America. In the process of the last-named occupation, a pattern half dollar reverse with CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA inscriptions was produced. The obverse was of the regular 1861 Liberty Seated type. The die used can be distinguished by having a tiny die break from Miss Liberty's nose to the seventh star. This die was also used to coin regular (non-Confederate reverse) Liberty Seated half dollars.

In 1879, J.W. Scott & Co. restruck 500 specimens of the 1861 Confederate half dollar by impressing the original reverse die on "planchets" made from 500 1861-O dollars whose reverses were ground off.

The Pryor Collection 1861 Confederate restrike half dollar is one of the finest in existence. An accompanying 1861-O regular issue with die break from Miss Liberty's nose to the border, important because of its die linkage with the original Confederate issue, is a gem.

Proofs were struck of all dates 1839 through 1865. Those before 1858 are very rare. In 1858, about 300 were made for collectors. From then onward, Proofs today are available in proportion to their mintage figures. Curiously, in numerous instances Mint State coins are far rarer today than are Proofs. This is explained by the fact that Proofs were specifically made for collectors and were preserved. On the other hand, business strike coins were made for circulation, and the survival of a Mint State example is strictly a matter of rare chance.

As a class Liberty Seated half dollars and other silver denominations bearing this motif are sufficiently fascinating to study and acquire that the Liberty Seated Collectors Club has enjoyed a strong membership for many years.

Pryor Collection Notes

The Liberty Seated half dollars in the Pryor Catalogue would make a memorable catalogue by themselves. Gem after gem, rarity after rarity, confront the observer.

The 1839 Without Drapery, the 1842-O Small Date, the 1846 over horizontal 6 will attract wide attention, and the simply incredible 1847/6 overdate will echo in the halls of numismatics forever.

Among New Orleans coins will be found many gems. The importance of these is brought to the forefront when it is recalled that they were issued in an era in which not a single numismatist collected mintmark varieties. Not even the Mint Cabinet (formed in 1838) saved current examples of New Orleans coinage. While worn examples of most issues are encountered with some frequency, many of the Pryor Collection coins emerge as great rarities in high Mint State levels.

As a rule of thumb, San Francisco Mint Liberty Seated half dollars of this era are rare in higher circulated grades if dated in the 1850s and scarce if from the 1860s. Mint State? For coins in the 1850s this grade is next to impossible to obtain, and yet the Pryor Collection has them. Splendid Mint State coins from the Civil War years of the 1860s are notable rarities as well.

1853

Liberty Seated, No Motto Arrows at Date, Rays on Reverse



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht
Issue date: 1853
Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper
Diameter: 30.6 mm
Weight: 192 grains
Edge: Reeded
Production mints: Philadelphia, New Orleans
Business strike mintage: 4,860,708
Proof mintage: Fewer than 10

1853 Arrows and Rays Half Dollars

In 1853, when the authorized weight of the half dollar was reduced from 206.25 grains to 192 grains, the change was noted on the coins by the addition of small arrowheads to each side of the date and rays above the eagle on the reverse. Otherwise the Liberty Seated motif remained the same as used from 1839 onward.

The weight change, which also occurred with half dimes, dimes, and quarter dollars, was necessitated by the worldwide rise in the price of silver. Due to large quantities of gold being mined in California, silver became "rare" in comparison. By early

1853, the bullion or melt-down value of silver coins exceeded their face value, and newly minted coins could not circulate effectively. The Act of February 21, 1853, provided for a decrease in the authorized weight, and solved the problem.

Just two varieties of the Arrows and Rays half dollars were produced: the 1853 Philadelphia issue of which 3,532,708 were made, and the 1853-O (New Orleans) with a mintage of 1,328,000.

Numismatic Notes

As is true of the quarter dollars, half dollars with arrows on the obverse and rays on the reverse are distinguished by being a one-year-only type.

Examples of the type are readily available in grades from Good through Extremely Fine or AU. Uncirculated coins are scarce, and truly superb Uncirculated pieces are rare. The New Orleans halves are scarcer than the Philadelphia issues.

Pryor Collection Notes

The Pryor Collection contains Mint State examples of both Philadelphia and New Orleans varieties.

1854-1855

Liberty Seated, No Motto Arrows at Date, No Rays on Reverse



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht
Issue dates: 1854-1855
Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper
Diameter: 30.6mm
Weight: 192 grains
Edge: Reeded
Production mints: Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco
Business strike mintage: 12,799,450
Proof mintage: Fewer than 140

1854-1855 With-Arrows Half Dollars

The Liberty Seated half dollar style of 1854-1855 with arrowheads at the date is the same as used in 1853 except that the reverse rays have been deleted. Thus, 1854-1855 dollars stand as a distinct type.

Coinage was produced primarily at Philadelphia and New Orleans. In 1855 the San Francisco Mint issued the denomination for the first time, striking 129,950 pieces.

Numismatic Notes

An interesting variation is provided by the 1855/4 overdate, a variety which was discovered in the early 1970s, apparently

independently by two researchers (Breen and Bowers). The low-mintage 1855-S is the only rare mintmark variety in this brief date span.

For the collector desiring a single coin for a type set, examples of the 1854-1855 design are readily available in all grades from Good through Extremely Fine to AU. Uncirculated pieces are scarce, and superb Uncirculated pieces are scarcer yet. Although 1854-O has the highest mintage, followed by 1855-O, it has been our experience that in Mint State the variety most often found is the 1854 Philadelphia Mint issue. The Pryor Collection contains gems of all these varieties.

Pryor Collection Notes

The curious and rare 1855/4 overdate is represented in the Pryor Collection specimen by a glittering gem. The first San Francisco Mint half dollar issue, the seldom seen 1855-S, is a splendid gem, one of the most memorable coins in this cabinet. The other issues of this two-year design type are beautiful gems as well.

1866-1891

Liberty Seated, With Motto



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht

Issue dates: 1866-1891

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6mm

Weight: 192 grains 1866 to 1873 no arrows; 192.9 grains later

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Carson City

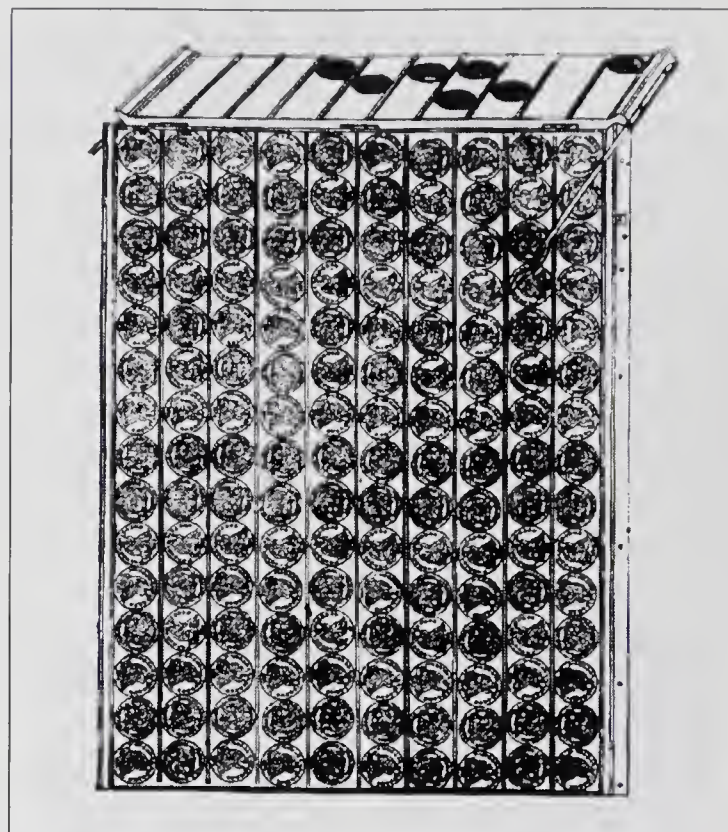
Business strike mintage: 56,138,834

Proof mintage: 20,923

1866-1891 With-Motto Half Dollars

The regular Liberty Seated design, which had been in use since 1839, was modified in 1866 by the addition of IN GOD WE TRUST to the reverse. The motto appears on a scroll or ribbon above the eagle. A similar change was effected in the quarter and dollar denominations as well as the higher gold values. The addition of a motto reflecting belief in the Deity was proposed as early as 1861, and during the next several years several phrases were proposed including GOD AND COUNTRY, GOD OUR TRUST, and the adopted IN GOD WE TRUST. The forms are reminiscent of the lines in the *Star Spangled Banner*, "And let this be our motto, In God is our trust."

Production of half dollars was continuous at the Philadelphia Mint from 1866 onward. Business strikes were also made at San



Dozens of 1872 Liberty Seated half dollars are shown racked in a wooden counting board. This device permitted freshly-minted coins to be counted quickly.

Francisco and Carson City, with several of the Carson City varieties, particularly those in the early 1870s, being rare today. Certain half dollars of 1873 and all of 1874 have arrows at the date and are a separate type discussed in the next listing. Business strike Philadelphia Mint issues from 1879 through 1890 were produced in low numbers, as there was a glut of coins on hand in banks and at the Treasury Department, and further examples were not needed.

Numismatic Notes

Examples of common dates within the series, Philadelphia Mint issues of 1875 through 1878, for example, are relatively easy to obtain in grades from Good through Very Fine. Extremely Fine coins are scarcer, AU pieces are scarcer yet, and Uncirculated coins can be called very scarce. Superb Uncirculated pieces are quite rare. Proofs exist in proportion to their original mintages.

A number of scarce varieties exist within this span. Carson City coins of 1871-1873 are all quite scarce in lower grades, very rare in higher levels of preservation, and legendary rarities in Mint State.

Among later mintmarked issues, the 1878-S is a prime rarity, especially in higher grades. Only 12,000 were minted, but most of even this low production probably went to the melting pot. 1878-CC falls into the scarce category, particularly in higher grades.

The 1877-S exists with and without drapery at the elbow, in a ratio of about three specimens of the former to one of the latter. This was not a design change, but as with the 1845-O no drapery (see earlier discussion), it was the result of a ground-down die.

Of particular interest are the low-mintage Philadelphia half dollars from 1879 through 1890. These fit in nicely with quarter



The Carson City Mint, opened in 1870, struck Liberty Seated half dollars through 1878. The building is shown as it appeared about the latter year. (Nevada State Museum photograph)

dollars of the same era. Coins were plentiful in circulation, thus few additional pieces were struck. Besides, the Philadelphia Mint was busy turning out millions of Morgan dollars (introduced in 1878).

1879-1890 halves are very rare in worn grades or in *true* Mint State. Most "Mint State" coins we have seen, even those in certified holders, have been misattributed Proofs.

Proofs exist in proportion to their original mintages.

Pryor Collection Notes

Years from now a new generation of numismatists will reflect upon the present catalogue and will marvel at many things, important among them being a breathtaking, spectacular lineup of Carson City Mint half dollars complete from 1870-CC to 1878-CC, each in Mint State. Probably, the market value of these, particularly for the 1870-CC through 1873-CC issues, will have to be re-evaluated after the present sale takes place. Once the auctioneer cries "Sold!" for the 1870-CC, 1871-CC, and 1872-CC, it is probably the case that an offer for \$1 million each for duplicate coins could not be filled unless the successful bidders wish to sell. Whatever these coins sell for—several tens of thousands of dollars each or more—they will be the numismatic treasures of a lifetime for the new owners. Perhaps the most poignant commentary is that the Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS), which has certified more coins than all other grading services combined, has never encountered equal or finer pieces.

Carson City half dollars, a marvelous lineup of San Francisco coins, and others will be forever remembered. Needing no further explanation to the specialist who has waited *years* to bid on a gem is the glittering prooflike 1878-S about to cross the auction block.

The low-mintage half dollars from 1879 onward are gems and have always been high on the popularity list with specialists.

1873-1874

Liberty Seated, With Motto
Arrows at Date



Designed by: Christian Gobrecht

Issue dates: 1873-1874

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6mm

Weight: 192.9 grains (12.50 grams)

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Carson City

Business strike mintage: 5,070,310

Proof mintage: 1,250

1873-1874 With-Arrows Half Dollars

Part way through 1873 the authorized weight of the half dollar denomination was increased slightly from 192 grains to 192.9 grains, the latter equaling precisely 12.50 grams. To signify this change, arrowheads were placed to the left and right of the date. After 1874 the weight standard remained the same, but the arrows were no longer used. Otherwise, the Liberty Seated with IN GOD WE TRUST motto type is the same as that used from 1866 through 1891 inclusive.

Numismatic Notes

The Philadelphia Mint produced the greatest number of coins during 1873-1874, so the type set collector normally gravitates toward one of these. Examples are readily available in grades from Good through Very Fine, are quite scarce in Extremely Fine grade, are scarcer yet in AU preservation, and are rare in Uncirculated state. Superb Uncirculated pieces are very rare.

One rare business strike exists in the series: the 1874-CC, of which just 59,000 were minted. The 1873-CC and 1873-S are in the scarce category. In full Mint State, *any* mintmarked issue is notable.

Proofs exist in proportion to the original mintages.

Pryor Collection Notes

The 1873-CC With Arrows half dollar is one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities of which numismatic dreams are made. No matter what the buyer pays, he or she has a crown jewel of American numismatics. The 1873-S is of incredible importance as well. Then follow the 1874-CC and 1874-S—breathtaking! Just a *single one* of *any* of these coins would be the highlight of an auction sale.

1892-1915

Barber or Liberty Head Type



Designed by: Charles E. Barber

Issue dates: 1892-1915

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6mm

Weight: 192.9 grains

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, New Orleans, Denver

Business strike mintage: 135,916,889

Proof mintage: 17,313

1892-1915 Barber Half Dollars

In 1892 the half dollar was redesigned to the so-called Barber type, sometimes also referred to as the Liberty Head design.

Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber's Miss Liberty faces right, her hair is in a Phrygian cap, and a wreath of laurel encircles her head. The word LIBERTY appears on a small band or ribbon above her forehead. IN GOD WE TRUST is above, six stars are to the left, seven stars are to the right, and the date is below. The



After striking, half dollars and other coins were put up in cloth bags and packed into metal-bound wooden kegs for shipment to banks and federal Sub-Treasuries.

same head of Miss Liberty appears on dimes and quarters of the era.

The reverse is an adaptation of the Great Seal of the United States and features a heraldic eagle grasping an olive branch and arrows, and holding in its beak a ribbon inscribed E PLURIBUS UNUM. A galaxy of stars is above. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and HALF DOLLAR surround.

Mintage was continuous at the Philadelphia and San Francisco Mints from 1892 through 1915, with additional pieces being supplied for many years by New Orleans and Denver.

Numismatic Notes

The type set collector will encounter no difficulty in acquiring specimens in grades of Good or Very Good. Fine pieces, believe it or not, are scarce, Very Fine coins are very scarce, and Extremely Fine coins can be called rare in the context of modern issues. AU coins are rarer yet, Uncirculated pieces are still more rare, and superb Uncirculated pieces are very rare.

Proofs exist in proportion to their original mintages.

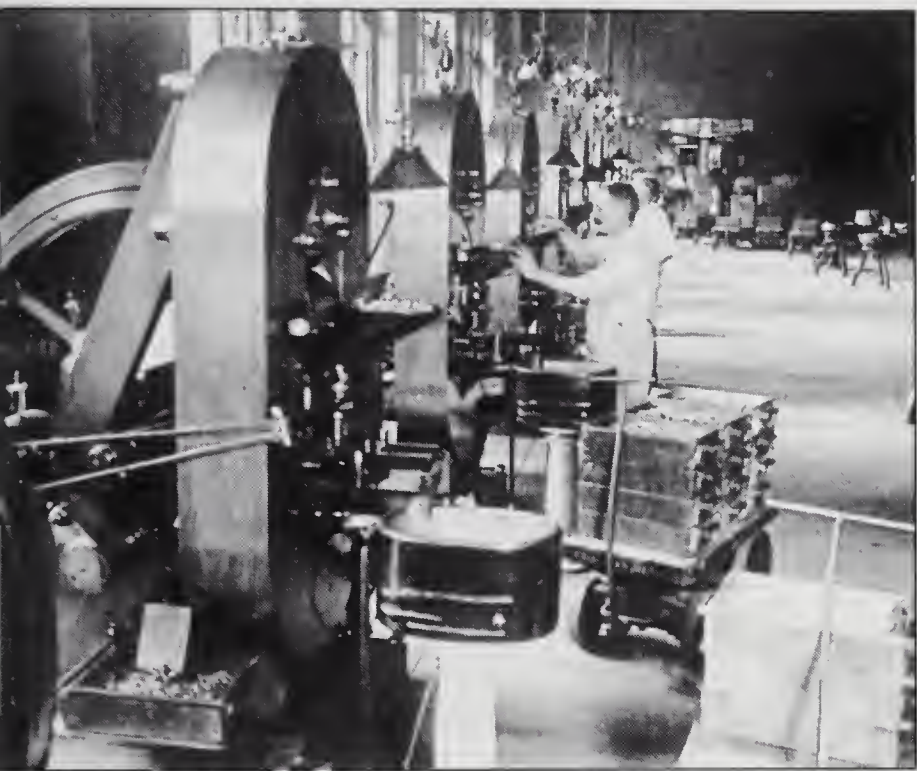
Glancing at mintage figure tables, there seem to be no rarities in the Barber half dollar series. However, a number of issues are considered to be key issues, and if Mint State pieces are considered, some Barber half dollars will hold their own with just about any rarity in the book. 1896-O, 1896-S, 1897-O, and 1897-S are rarities in Mint State that were well known years ago, and the 1901-S, 1903-O, and 1904-O have gathered laurels as well. More obscure is the 1907-S, which has become recognized only recently as a landmark rarity in Mint State.

Among Philadelphia Mint halves, the 1913, 1914, and 1915 are highly prized for their low business strike mintages. The Proofs of the last two dates, the 1914 and 1915, also have very low mintages, making these dates especially desirable.

Pryor Collection Notes

The Barber half dollar specialist desiring high-grade rarities would do well to mortgage the farm and come to the sale with a generous checkbook balance. There are certain times in numismatics when *opportunity* is more important than *price*. Take as examples the aforementioned 1896-O, 1896-S, 1897-O, 1897-S, 1901-S, 1903-O, 1904-O, and 1907-S rarities—and it would be easy to expand this list. If the current *theoretical* market value of one of these is "X," a figure based upon either a sale record of long ago or what someone estimates such a coin *might* bring, reality might dictate a price of "2X" or "3X" to actually capture the coin. What then? Now, the new market value of the coin is, say, three times what it was before the sale. Anyone wanting a specimen will now use the new "3X" price as a starting point, but probably none will be available.

In the history of numismatics, every major collection ever formed was assembled by "reaching" to obtain desired gems. James Bennett Pryor in his day bought few *bargains*, but he did purchase many *good buys* and great rarities.



Striking coins at the Philadelphia Mint circa 1904. Barber half dollars were struck in this new facility (opened in 1901) until the end of the series in 1915.

The Pryor cabinet of Barber half dollars is one of the very finest ever to cross the auction block and is truly of legendary proportions.

1916-1947

Liberty Walking Type



Designed by: Adolph A. Weinman

Issue dates: 1916-1947

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6 mm

Weight: 192.9 grains

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Denver

Business strike mintage: 485,320,340

Proof mintage: 74,400

1916-1947 Liberty Walking Half Dollars

In 1916 the design of Adolph A. Weinman was selected for the new half dollar motif to replace the Barber design which had been in use since 1892. Weinman, a sculptor, also produced the Liberty Head or "Mercury" dime introduced the same year.

The obverse depicts Miss Liberty walking toward the sun, her right arm outstretched, her left arm carrying a bundle of branches, and with a starry cape behind. LIBERTY is above, while IN GOD

WE TRUST is to the lower right, and the date is below. The motif seems to have been inspired by Saint-Gaudens' design for the illustrious double eagle of 1907, which in turn is quite similar to "The Sower" used on French coinage.

The reverse shows an eagle perched on a rocky crag, from which grows a pine branch, symbol of strength. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA is above, E PLURIBUS UNUM is to the left, and HALF DOLLAR is below.

The design has been a favorite with numismatists ever since the time of issue, and many consider it to be one of the most beautiful motifs ever employed on a circulating coin.

Numismatic Notes

Specimens of the Liberty Walking half dollar are readily available for the type coin collector, with those dated in the 1940s being most easily found. Grades available range from Good through superb Uncirculated, although well-struck pieces are decidedly scarce, especially if from a branch mint. Walter Breen has written that the *only* issues that are *fully* struck are certain 1916 and 1917 Philadelphia Mint coins and Proofs minted from 1936 through 1942. Thus, business strikes within the entire series exist in varying degrees of sharpness to mount a challenge to the discerning specialist.

There are several scarce issues among 1916-1947 half dollars. The rarest in Uncirculated condition is 1921-S. Other scarce issues in this grade include 1919, 1919-D, and 1923-S. In general, *any* branch mint coin dated before 1933, and any Philadelphia Mint issue from 1918 through 1921 (there were no other Philadelphia halves until 1934) are rare in higher Mint State levels.

In worn grades, key issues include 1917-S with mintmark on obverse, 1921, 1921-D, 1921-S, and 1938-D.

Rather than aspire to collect all dates and mintmarks in Mint State—something that few can afford to do—many numismatists have put together "short sets" beginning either with 1933-S (there is no 1933 Philadelphia coin) or 1941, and continuing through to the end of the series in 1947. Especially popular is the 1941-1947 set. Such coins are relatively inexpensive, and in Mint State are really beautiful.

Among Proofs, the scarcest issue is 1936, as the mintage of just 3,901 pieces indicates. Among 1941 Proof halves, there are two varieties: with the monogram of the designer, AW, on the reverse, and without the monogram. The without-AW coins are much more often seen.

Pryor Collection Notes

The collection commences with three different varieties of 1916 *patterns*—coins that are so rare that most professional numismatists have never *seen* even a single specimen! Moreover, the grades of the Pryor Collection patterns approach or are full Proof finish, far above the average of the few other pieces known to exist.

Among regular issues, nearly all are gem Mint State including the mintmark issues of 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920, and all three of the 1921-dated rarities. Quality such as this was difficult to find years ago when James Bennett Pryor was assembling his cabinet. Today, with more widespread demand and with the passage of years, the task is even more difficult. It is doubtful if a numismatist today, even if provided with an unlimited checking account balance, could equal the present holding in less than several years, and even then there may be some "want list" items remaining. Again, *opportunity* may be the key word to those participating in the present sale.

1948-1963

Franklin Type



Designed by: John R. Sinnock

Issue dates: 1948-1963

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6 mm

Weight: 192.9 grains

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Denver

Business strike mintage: 465,814,455

Proof mintage: 15,886,955

1948-1963 Franklin Half Dollars

In 1948 John R. Sinnock, chief engraver of the Philadelphia Mint, produced a new design for the half dollar, to replace the Liberty Walking motif which had been in use since 1916. The Franklin half dollar depicts a head and shoulders portrait of Benjamin Franklin on the obverse, facing right, with LIBERTY above and IN GOD WE TRUST below. The date is to the right.

The reverse shows the Liberty Bell with UNITED STATES OF AMERICA above and HALF DOLLAR below. The motto E PLURIBUS UNUM is to the left while a small eagle is to the right.

Numismatic Notes

At the time of issue, the design was criticized by many, perhaps because it is rather plain in comparison to the "classic" Liberty Walking style. However, in recent years Franklin half dollars have emerged as popular pieces, and today they are highly desired by numismatists.

The type set collector can easily obtain a business strike in any desired grade from Very Fine to superb Uncirculated, although sharply struck Uncirculated pieces showing full bell lines on the reverse and other minutely detailed areas are elusive for some

issues. Proofs were minted from 1950 through 1964 and are available in proportion to their original production quantities.

The design of the pieces is such that a small amount of handling produced a large amount of marks. For this reason, most Mint State coins are in lower levels from MS-60 through MS-63. There are several varieties that are exceedingly common in these lower Mint State grades, but which emerge as rarities (relatively speaking) at the gem level.

Pryor Collection Notes

The Franklin half dollars in the Pryor Collection consist of all date and mintmark issues in attractive Mint State preservation and will be sold as a set.

1892-1954

Commemorative Half Dollars



Designed by: Various engravers and artists, mostly from the private sector after the earlier issues

Issue dates: 1892-1954, the "classic" era

Composition: 0.900 part silver, 0.100 part copper

Diameter: 30.6 mm

Weight: 192.9 grains

Edge: Reeded

Production mints: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Denver

Business strike mintages: Vary

1892-1954 Commemorative Half Dollars

In 1892 the first United States commemorative half dollar was issued in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, to observe the 400th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the New World. The exposition opened a year late in 1893, necessitating the production of an 1893-dated coin. From that beginning until the last Carver-Washington half dollar was produced in 1954, commemorative half dollars were issued to the extent of 48 major design types and 142 total varieties (including dates, mintmarks, and other varieties).

Numismatic Notes

Commemorative half dollars were sold at a premium and, thus, were numismatic from the very beginning, although over the years many were bought by the general public, and unsold quantities of certain issues were placed into circulation for face value.

In terms of low mintage, the crown goes to a variety of 1935 Boone Bicentennial half dollar struck at the Denver Mint and with the small additional date "1934" on the reverse; just 2,003 were struck. Close on its heels is the 1935-S with small "1934,"

made to the extent of only 2,004 coins. Just 2,100 were struck of each of the 1938, 1938-D, and 1938-S Boone half dollars, and the 1939, 1939-S, and 1939-S Arkansas halves were minted in numbers of just 2,104, 2,104, and 2,105 respectively. However, even though these Boone and Arkansas coins are great rarities in the series, there are other dates and mintmarks of the same Boone and Arkansas designs that were made in much larger quantities and, accordingly, are readily available today.

At the other end of the scale is the 1952 Carver-Washington half dollar of which 2,006,292 were produced.

In terms of desirability today, the three most popular design types are the 1928 Hawaiian Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary), 1935 Hudson Sesquicentennial, and the 1935 Old Spanish Trail. Just 10,008 of each of these were made.

In terms of absolute rarity in gem Mint State, the rarest varieties probably include 1921 Alabama, 1921 Alabama 2X2, 1921 Missouri, 1921 Missouri 2★4, and 1922 Grant With Star. Each of these was made in larger quantities than the aforementioned Boone and Arkansas rarities, but fewer were preserved in high Mint State levels.

The 48 different designs and 142 different die varieties within the 1892-1954 classic commemorative half dollar series each have their own fascinating story to tell.

Pryor Collection Notes

The commemorative half dollars in the Pryor Collection are of attractive, indeed *remarkable*, quality and are separately described in the catalogue to follow.

About Grading

Grading in 1996, (and in the past, and probably in the future) is always a matter of opinion. And, opinions differ.

In the present volume the cataloguers, drawing upon long experience in handling many of America's finest coins and collections, have endeavored to grade each piece as carefully as possible. However, opinions may differ.

As a guide to the approximate or relative rarity of certain issues, PCGS *Population Report* data have been given, regardless of whether or not that particular coin has been certified by PCGS. Such figures *do not* include the presently-offered specimen if attributed by PCGS, as the attribution was too recent to be listed in the report used.

No representation of any kind is made that if the coin were to be examined by PCGS it would be graded the same. Indeed, it is often the case that PCGS and other grading services are inconsistent in their grading of identical coins when they are resubmitted. Further, the PCGS data are biased in favor of rarer coins. For example, probably a large percentage of rare Mint State 1921-S half dollars trading on the market in recent years have been submitted to PCGS or its leading competitors, Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America (NGC) and ANACS. On the other hand, relatively few of the extant Mint State 1943 half dollars, a common date, have been submitted. In practice, the 1921-S is probably several thousand times rarer than the 1943 in Mint State. To carry the illustration further, the population data show more Mint State 1921-S half dollars certified than specimens of the common 1943 in well-worn Very Good grade, and yet hundreds of thousands of the latter exist.

Still further, among higher grade coins many pieces have been resubmitted to the grading services in hopes of achieving a higher number the second or third time around. In many instances, a listing of, say, 10 pieces known may represent only four or five *different specimens*.

The buyer seeking additional information can consult population listings of other grading services, condition census data published in various studies, and other sources.

Beyond this, it is important to note that the grading services simply assign a number to a coin. A listing such as "MS-63" or "MS-65" may represent a coin that is as ugly as a toad or which is struck as flat as a pancake. Thus, in our opinion, a number assigned to a coin is just one of several elements that comprise the desirability and worth of a coin. Others include sharpness of strike,

lustre, and overall aesthetic appeal.

Years Ago

In his recollection of James Bennett Pryor's collecting efforts, Dr. John McCloskey noted that many of the coins which Jim Pryor called AU were originally listed by their sellers as Uncirculated (Mint State) or even Gem Uncirculated. It has been popular to tabulate auction and fixed-price listings to determine the rarity of a given coin in Mint State, but historical data are often way off the mark. Experience is the great teacher, and such listings must be evaluated by those who have working knowledge with the coins themselves. Different series, different dates, and coins with different degrees of rarity are apt to have different variances.

For example, if you were to survey auction catalogues published before 1985 and were to list all of the 1807 Capped Bust half dollars described as Uncirculated, you in fact would probably have a list of which 10% or fewer coins were *truly* Uncirculated. On the other hand, probably 20% to 40% of the 1831-dated half dollars listed as Uncirculated would really have been in this grade.

If you were to list all the Uncirculated 1884 half dollars you could find, in fact this list would really contain many *Proofs*.

To complete the illustration, if you were to list all of the Uncirculated 1936 Norfolk commemorative half dollars you could find in old catalogues, probably 95% or more would represent actual Uncirculated coins.

Appreciating Rarity

Many of the half dollars in the James Bennett Pryor Collection are far rarer than published data indicate. Jim Pryor was a connoisseur *par excellence*, and often what was "Uncirculated" to an enthusiastic seller might have been only AU to him.

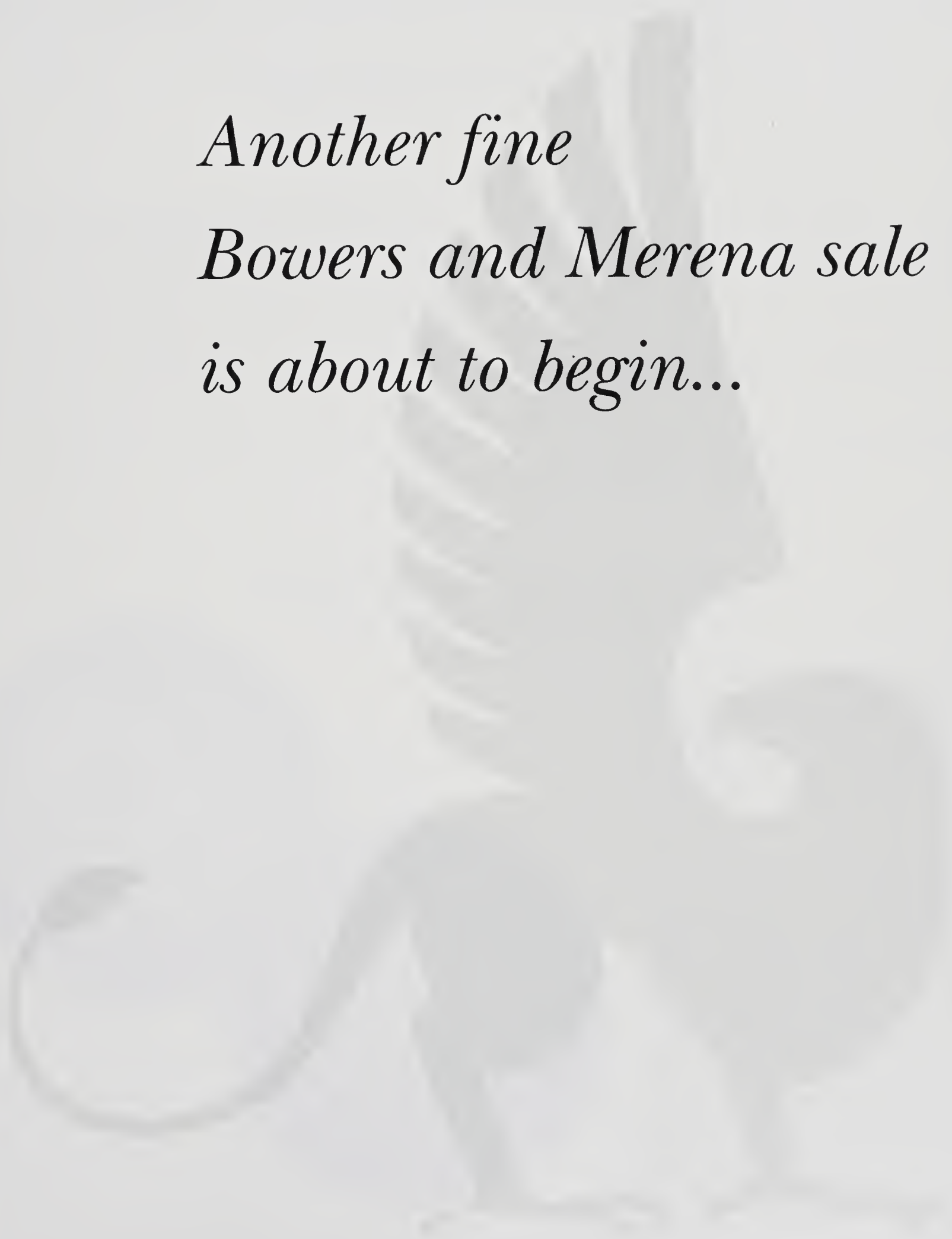
Our notes under 1870-S give an illustration of a great *condition rarity* that is known by very few collectors.

Our notes under 1920-S relate that in the market there were and are gem coins, but often these did not satisfy Jim Pryor, who consistently sought the very best.

The James Bennett Pryor Collection is one of those very rare cabinets containing an elegant combination of high numerical grade, excellent striking within the context of a given variety or issue, and outstanding aesthetic appeal.

It is a monument to *connoisseurship*.

*Another fine
Bowers and Merena sale
is about to begin...*





The James Bennett Pryor Collection of **UNITED STATES HALF DOLLARS**

Thursday Evening, January 25, 6:30 PM Sharp

United States Half Dollars: Lots 1-469

1794-1795 FLOWING HAIR ISSUES

These early silver coins were struck during the administration of our young nation's first president, George Washington. Less than 20 years had passed since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Only 15 states comprised the Union with the 16th, Tennessee, not to be admitted until 1796.

In the Southern states agriculture was the primary industry in 1794. Eli Whitney had invented the cotton gin a year earlier in 1793, and cotton soon became the crop of choice, even more profitable than tobacco. The Northern states saw the Whiskey

Rebellion in western Pennsylvania in 1794, an insurgency by frontiersmen against the federal excise tax on whiskey, which was more a medium of exchange than merely a beverage. The next year, in Kentucky, the James B. Beam Distilling Company was founded.

Overseas, Robespierre was victorious in Paris, marking the height of the "Reign of Terror" in the summer of 1794.

Coinage:

At the Mint, this period saw the tenure of directors David Rittenhouse (1792-1795), Henry William DeSaussure (1795), and Elias Boudinot (1795-1805).

Attractive 1794 Overton-101a

First Year of the Denomination



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

1 1794 Overton-101a. VF-30 (PCGS). Rarity-4.

Surfaces: Attractive blue and gray with lighter toning on the devices. Microscopic surface marks are consistent with the grade. A few faint, mint-caused adjustment marks are noted in a crossing pattern within the hair. Obverse and reverse rims are fully detailed with those on the reverse especially bold. Both rims are free of the small bumps and bruises that often occur on these early issues.

Die State: Intermediate. The reverse die crack, mentioned by Al C. Overton, is present through F and leaves, into the field before reaching the final S.

Narrative: Probably coined late in the sequence of 1794 half dollars. Most likely included in the delivery of 18,164 pieces February 4, 1795.

PCGS Population: 30 coins certified from VF-20 to VF-35; 8 finer, finest is MS-63. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Norman W. Pullen, May 5, 1979.

At the time the half dollar was the largest silver denomination being coined, the dollar press (used in 1794) being considered inadequate. The large dollar mintage of early 1795 was to an extent a substitute for a silver dollar production that could not be made until later in the year when new equipment arrived.

Additional information concerning the silver coinages of 1794-1795 can be found in the Robert Hilt and Q. David Bowers (*Silver Dollars*) books cited in the Bibliography.



2 1795 2 Leaves Below Wings. O-104. VF-35 (PCGS). Rarity-4.

Surfaces: Album toning with concentric rings of beautiful deep blue, rose, amber, pale gray, and light blue. The devices are highlighted in silver gray. A few minor abrasions are noted in the left obverse field. Both rims are sharp and choice.

Die State: Early. Obverse die cracks are visible yet very faint.

Narrative: Two distinct types of 1795 half dollars have been identified. The presently offered type features two leaves inside the wreath below each wing. The other type (see next lot) displays three leaves inside the wreath below each wing. Similar varieties are known in the dollar series, but unlike half dollars, each is readily available. On the other hand, the three-leaves 1795 half dollar is a landmark rarity.

This obverse is identified by the tiny die lump joining the lowest point of star 15. The reverse is notable in that the left serifs of M are widely recut.

PCGS Population: 16; 47 finer, finest MS-63. (Population combines all two-leaves varieties of the year, not just O-104.)

Pedigree: Purchased from J. & D. Fox, June 17, 1981. Ex Kelman & Associates, February 16, 1980.

Rare 1795 Three Leaves

"The" Variety of the Year



3 1795 3 Leaves Below Wings. O-111. VG-10 (PCGS). Rarity-5.

Surfaces: Essentially choice. A few microscopic scratches are noted on the obverse. Deep steel intermingles with lighter rose.

Die State: A reverse die crack is noted from the rim at 10:00, past the left side of the first S, through the leaves, and into the left wing. A retained cud has formed to the right of this crack, weakening the letters STA.

Narrative: The obverse die is identified by the sharply repunched date, a notable feature in itself. This is the only 1795 variety with three leaves under each wing and thus is instantly identifiable. A major rarity of which probably fewer than 50 are known. (The Overton estimate seems too liberal to us.) The listing of the variety in the *Guide Book* has created a tremendous demand for it.

PCGS Population: 2; 9 finer, finest MS-61.

Pedigree: Purchased from Floyd Farley, April 28, 1983.

1801-1807 DRAPED BUST, HERALDIC EAGLE ISSUES

President Thomas Jefferson, who promised "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations," was inaugurated to the first of two terms in 1801. His administration was responsible for obtaining the Louisiana Purchase from France.

Westward expansion continued with Ohio being admitted to the Union as the 17th state in 1803. John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) arrived in the Ohio Valley. Fort Dearborn (Chicago) was established this same year. Explorers Lewis and Clark were soon on their way to study and report upon the northwest region of the Louisiana Territory (taking a supply of Indian Peace medals with them for distribution along the way), and in 1806, Zebulon Pike crossed the prairie and sighted in the distance the Colorado peak later named for him.

The famous chemical manufacturer, E. I. duPont de Nemours and Co., was founded on the Brandywine River in Delaware. Northern farmers formed associations to consider mutual points of interest. The first agricultural fair, forerunner to today's county fair, was held in Massachusetts in 1807.

Overseas, the union of Great Britain and Ireland formed the United Kingdom in 1801.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Elias Boudinot's term as director ended and Robert Patterson's began. John Reich was hired as assistant engraver on April 1, 1807, after being recommended for the position by Thomas Jefferson as early as 1801. In 1807 Reich would design the Capped Bust half dollar, and in the 20th century, a numismatic society would be named for him.

Quality 1801



4 1801 O-101. EF-40 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Surfaces: Slightly prooflike pale blue and golden rose lustre. Obverse and reverse rims are free of bruises.

Die State: Perfect dies save for a few reverse rust marks as always seen.

Narrative: First year of issue of the Draped Bust, Heraldic Eagle design combination which would be continued in use until mid-1807. The Overton-101 variety is the more common of two known die combinations used to produce 1801-dated coinage. However, among dates of this design, the 1801 is second only to the 1802 in terms of scarcity.

PCGS Population: 1; 4 finer, finest AU-58. (Population combines both varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Auction '80, Lot 1282.

Garrett's 1802 Half Dollar

Among Finest Known



5 1802 O-101. AU-50 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Pale grayish green with a touch of rose on the obverse and traces of blue on the reverse.

Die State: Clash marks from the wing feathers are visible in the right obverse field.

Narrative: The most difficult coinage year of this design to locate, especially in high grades. Only one die combination is known for 1802 dated coinage. The reverse die was earlier used to coin 1801 issues of the Overton-102 variety.

Nearly all known 1802 half dollars are in grades significantly lower than that offered here. Indeed, this is one of the very finest known to exist.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, AU-58.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 278, sold to the order of The Johns Hopkins University; earlier acquired by T. Harrison Garrett from the J. Colvin Randall Collection.

In the 1870s and 1880s the two pre-eminent collectors of United States coins were T. Harrison Garrett, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad heir of Baltimore; and Lorin G. Parmelee, bean baker of Boston. The Parmelee Collection was sold piecemeal beginning in 1890, while the Garrett Collection passed to Robert Garrett and then to John Work Garrett, and in 1942 to The Johns Hopkins University, which deaccessioned it beginning in the 1970s. Curators of the Garrett Collection in later decades included Sarah Elizabeth Freeman, Carl W.A. Carlson, and Susan (Mrs. David) Tripp.

Attractive 1803



6 1803 O-101. Large 3, Small Reverse Stars. AU-55 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Strike: Fully struck except for some weakness on the right edge of the shield and the eagle's wing at this point. Above average.

Surfaces: Golden brown with blue peripheral toning. A few small pits are noted at the bottom of the reverse. A few other very minor surface imperfections are mentioned for accuracy.

Die State: A very fine obverse crack is faintly visible through the tops of LIBERTY.

Narrative: Four die varieties are known for 1803-dated coinage. The first two feature a large 3 in date, with a vertical serif at the top left of this digit, along with small reverse stars. The next features a large 3 in date with large reverse stars, while the final variety has a small 3 in date and large reverse stars.

In general half dollars of the 1801-1807 era are lightly struck; the James Bennett Pryor Collection coins were selected with great care

and as a group are significantly above average.

PCGS Population: 4; 3 finer, finest MS-63. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Ed Hipps, February 16, 1980.



7 1803 Small 3. O-104. EF-45. Rarity-3.

Surfaces: Album toning with golden central details. Blue and amber peripheral toning. A few tiny nicks are grade consistent.

Die State: Early. A short obverse crack extends from the rim through the left arm of T. Two sets of reverse clash marks are visible. The reverse crack through ST, clouds, and ES is faintly visible.

Narrative: The small 3 date digit features a short diagonal serif slanting down from the top left of the digit. This is marginally the scarcest variety of 1803 half dollar coinage.

PCGS Population: 6; 15 finer, finest MS-63. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-104.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Hank Rodgers, February 16, 1980.

Exceptional 1805/4 Overdate



8 1805/4 Close Date. O-101. AU-58 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Surfaces: Satiny lustre with amber, gray, and pale blue toning. An exceptional specimen of an issue that is usually seen in significantly lower grades.

Die State: Minor obverse cracks are noted from 5:00 to 6:00, below and into the date.

Narrative: The first overdate in the half dollar series. Two obverse dies were produced in anticipation of 1804-dated half dollar coinage but not used. Early in the next year, these dies, which had not yet been annealed for use, were overdated and put into production. These two obverse dies were married with three reverse dies to create three distinct overdate varieties. This is the closest one can come to an "1804 half dollar."

PCGS Population: None previously certified at this level. Now the finest known PCGS certification.

Pedigree: Purchased from Ed Milas, June 27, 1981.

Coinage dies were produced using die steel which was softened to aid in the engraving process. Once the dies were completed, they were annealed to allow for the extreme pressure of coinage production. During use the dies became even harder and brittle, eventually leading to the various die cracks often seen on early issues as well as modern issues today. Up to the point that the dies were annealed, changes could be easily executed. After annealing and hardening through use, any changes would have the potential liability of shattering the die. With very few exceptions, overdated dies were not used in the prior coinage year.

Many years ago dealer B. Max Mehl claimed to have an "1804 half dollar," but upon close study it proved to be an 1805/4 with the 5 digit tooled away.



9 1805 Large 5. O-111. AU-55 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Strike: Exceptional.

Surfaces: Mottled blue and rose toning. A small planchet lamination defect is noted between stars 6, 7, and the rim. The edge letters are bleeding through to the obverse rim, primarily from 1:00 to 3:00.

Die State: The obverse displays extensive clash marks. A thin die crack joins the tops of ES OF AMERICA and the eagle's tail feathers, disappearing in the field left of the tail.

Narrative: A scarce die variety as are most dated 1805. Fourteen distinct varieties are known with only one (Overton-112) considered common. A total of 211,722 coins were produced in 1805 for an average of just over 15,000 coins per die marriage. Of these 15,000 coins we would estimate 1.5%, or just 225, exist today. Certainly far and away Condition Census for O-111.

PCGS Population: 2; 3 finer, finest MS-61. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-111.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Wade Hinderling, July 27, 1984.

When edge lettering was placed on the planchet with the lettering not perfectly centered, the letters would extend physically off the edge. This would create tiny voids on one of the large planchet surfaces which would become either the obverse or the reverse. Once the planchet was struck, these lettering voids would appear as small voids in the rim which look almost exactly like rim nicks. When you notice a nick in the rim, and it matches the position of the edge letters, it is most likely caused by edge letter bleeding. If, however, you notice a nick in the rim and there is no corresponding edge letter, this would be considered post-production damage.



10 1806 Pointed 6, No Stem Through Claw. O-109. AU-55 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp although stars 1 through 7 are weak.

Surfaces: Grayish white central details with pale blue and russet highlights. Very minor edge letter bleeding is noted on the obverse. Faint vertical planchet striations are noted in the left obverse field.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A one-variety type coin in the 1806 series. This is one of the more notable engraving gaffes of the era, inasmuch as the eagle's talons are grasping thin air!

The collector of minor design variations will desire several ex-

amples of half dollar coinage from this year. The first is the overdate with a knobbed 6 over 5. The next is the perfect date with knobbed 6 and with the stem through the eagle's claw on the reverse. This knobbed 6 also exists with the reverse die having no stem through the claw, however only five such coins are currently known to exist. Finally, the pointed 6 was introduced and is combined with both reverse styles, that with the stem not through the eagle's claw (the coin offered here) and with the stem extending through the claw (see next lot). Additionally, one obverse die had the 6 first punched on its side, then corrected.

PCGS Population: 24; 33 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines several varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales, Windsor Collection, November 1981, Lot 106.



11 1806 Pointed 6, Stem Through Claw. O-115a. AU-53 (PCGS).

Strike: Hair details slightly weak at forehead and back of head.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Three very minor toning spots are noted on the obverse, before Liberty's face. A pleasing example for the casual collector or the specialist.

Die State: A die crack joins the base of the date with stars 1 through 5. A single set of obverse and reverse clash marks are noted. Reverse cracks are not present.

Narrative: This obverse die is instantly recognized by the very broad recutting of the letters TY.

PCGS Population: 14; 57 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines numerous varieties of the year, not just O-115.)

Pedigree: Ex Mid-American, February 1985, Lot 467.

Bowers and Merena Experience!

Of the top 10 world's record coin auction prices, we hold six, including five of the top seven! When the world's most valuable collection was sold (the \$25 million Garrett Collection of U.S. Coins owned by The Johns Hopkins University), we sold it. When the second most valuable collection was sold (the \$20 million Norweb Collection), we sold it. Over a span of many years we have sold more than \$200 million worth of coins for over 10,000 consignors. When it comes to experience, we offer what you are seeking. Whether you have a group of coins worth \$2,000 (our minimum due to bookkeeping considerations) or \$25 million, you have come to the right place!

Incredible Gem 1806 O-120

From The Garrett Collection



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 12 1806 Pointed 6, Stem Through Claw. O-120. MS-64 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Strike: Typical. Light weakness of hair detail is noted at the forehead and back of head. Wing feathers are strong.

Surfaces: Rainbow toned with appealing russet, pale gold, bluish green, and lilac.

Die State: Two sets of obverse clash marks are noted. A die crack joins stars 1 through 6 and curves to the back of the head.

Narrative: Virtually equal to the MS-65 (PCGS) example sold in our Commodore Perry Sale last January. A truly incredible coin from a grade and aesthetic viewpoint.

PCGS Population: 1; 4 finer, all MS-65. (Population combines numerous varieties of the year, not just O-120.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 285; previously ex Bangs & Co., March 24, 1881.

Although Bangs & Co. sometimes offered its own coin sales, primarily the firm's rooms served as a venue for auctions catalogued by other individuals and firms.

Present readers interested in 19th century numismatic lore and history would do well to acquire the two superbly researched volumes on American numismatic auction catalogues written by John W. Adams and published by George Kolbe and to join the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. Windows on collecting of the era are provided by Q. David Bowers' *The History of United States Coinage as Illustrated by the Garrett Collection* and the same author's two-volume set, *The American Numismatic Association Centennial History, 1891-1991*.

For first-hand views of the era, back copies of the *American Journal of Numismatics* provide fascinating reading.



- 13 1807 Draped Bust. O-105. MS-62 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average for this issue which generally comes very weak in the upper hair details. The hair strands at the forehead are visible. The top edge of the eagle's left wing is slightly weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Traces of gold patina surrounding the stars are very faint. One small pedigree nick is noted at the dentils left of the date.

Die State: Clashed and cracked, yet earlier than the described "a" die state in the Overton-Parsley reference.

Narrative: Transitional year among half dollar coinage. Ten varieties of the Draped Bust design have been identified, with only one of these (Overton-101) considered rare. The present specimen of O-105 is at the Condition Census level.

PCGS Population: 9; 24 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all Draped Bust varieties of the year, not just O-105.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, October 1978, Lot 1262; earlier from Superior Galleries, February 1976, Lot 605.

1807-1836 CAPPED BUST ISSUES

John Reich's Capped Bust coinage was struck during the presidential administrations of James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, and Andrew Jackson—an illustrious group of leaders for a classic coinage.

Robert Fulton successfully navigated the first steamboat from New York City to Albany in 1807. Just 13 years later, 72 steamboats were operating on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. Fulton's invention was an important tool in the nation's development. After the War of 1812 and Francis Scott Key's composition of the *Star Spangled Banner*, expansion and growth were underway again. The famous Erie Canal was begun in 1817 and completed in eight years. The 363-mile-long waterway connected the Atlantic Ocean with Lake Erie and the Great Lakes and facilitated the economic development of the upper areas of the Midwest.

Marquis de Lafayette, French hero of the American Revolution, visited America and was declared by Congress to be "the nation's guest." His activities were reported in *Niles' Weekly Register*. Large cents, Capped Bust halves, and other pieces, primarily dated 1824, were counterstamped with the portraits of Washington and Lafayette, probably from dies by Charles Cushing Wright. His visit marked expansion of private banks and insurance companies. Very quickly, however, economic conditions turned downward and a business recession was at hand.

In 1828 the first railroad was built in Massachusetts with the Baltimore and Ohio having its beginnings a year later. By the end of the Capped Bust half dollar era, the B&O had over 1,000 miles of track in several states and had laid the foundation for

the Garrett family fortune, with eventual effects on the history of numismatics as we know it. At the time of the first railroad the nation was entering the Jacksonian era.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Robert Patterson, Samuel Moore, and Robert Maskell Patterson were successively in charge. John Reich finished his term as assistant engraver and William Kneass eventually took over as engraver. The Mint Act of June 28, 1834, helped the nation's economy and permitted gold coins to effectively circulate once again. The second Mint building

was underway and would be inaugurated in 1833 (the third facility would be opened in 1901 and the present or fourth in 1969).

Silver dollars were last coined for circulation in 1804 (from earlier-dated dies). From that point until the introduction of just 600 Gobrecht silver dollars in 1836 followed by a paltry 1,000 more in 1837 and just 300 more (of a slightly different design) in 1839, the half dollar reigned supreme as the large currently-minted silver coin of the land.

Memorable 1807 "Bearded Goddess"



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

14 1807 Bearded Goddess. O-111a. AU-53 (PCGS). Rarity-4.

Strike: Bold with very slight weakness on the drapery ribbon and clasp.

Surfaces: Very choice surfaces with deep blue-gray peripheral toning. The central portion of obverse and reverse are pale gray.

Die State: The "beard" is complete but faint.

Narrative: A die crack from the underside of the chin to the top of the bust, below, gave rise to the "Bearded Goddess" name. The identity of the numismatist who penned this name is unknown to this cataloguer (Mark Borckardt). When selling this coin, Sheridan Downey stated his belief that this is the fourth finest known. Steve Herrman's survey of 300 auction catalogues and fixed price lists references just three examples grading EF-45 and one AU-50. Although grading population data are not consistent (and probably never will be), this lovely specimen is surely Condition Census.

PCGS Population: Unspecified. The PCGS Population report does not break down the varieties of 1807 Capped Bust half dollars.

Pedigree: Purchased from Sheridan Downey, III, April 16, 1989.

The 1807 "Bearded Goddess" half dollar is one of several instances in American numismatics in which die cracks, damage, or states have created a widely-collected variety (among others are the 1804 "Spiked Chin" half cent, 1807 "Comet" cent, 1922 "Plain" Lincoln cent, and 1800 "AMERICA" dollar).

Attractive 1807 50/20 C.

Error Denomination



15 1807 50/20 C. O-112. MS-62.

Strike: Slight weakness is visible on the drapery and Liberty's cheek. The eagle's head is weak, as is the juncture of the eagle's left

wing and the shield. This is characteristic of the issue.

Surfaces: Pale gold strengthening to deep blue along the periphery.

Die State: Very faint clash marks, from the ribbon, are visible above the date.

Narrative: An engraving blunder created the faulty denomination. Possibly this is a "5" cut over an erroneous "2" or may simply be the result of this "5" first rotated 180° and corrected.

As a class, the Capped Bust half dollars of 1807 are rarely seen in Mint State. There was no "first-year-of-issue" public interest or hoarding syndrome for this design, and the survival of high-grade coins was strictly a matter of chance.

PCGS Population: 5; 5 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all Capped Bust varieties of the year, not just O-112.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1540; earlier from Stack's, Maurice Bauman sale, December 1966.

Prooflike 1807 Small Stars

Superb Gem



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

16 1807 Small Stars. O-113. MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: The only noted weakness is in the left wing at the juncture of the shield. One of the very finest in existence from a sharpness aspect.

Surfaces: Prooflike! Intense blue with lighter lilac at the centers. A few tiny marks are hidden under the toning.

Die State: Two sets of obverse and reverse clash marks with very minor cracks.

Narrative: An absolutely stunning example of a variety that is virtually never seen in Mint State preservation. In his *Encyclopedia*, Walter Breen mentioned that he had seen *none* Uncirculated. Perhaps four or five Mint State examples actually exist, and it is not known if they would even remotely measure up to this landmark coin.

PCGS Population: One other MS-65 certified among *all* Capped Bust varieties of the year, not just O-113.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1978, Lot 308; from Lester Merkin, February 1972, Lot 133.

Mint State 1807 Large Stars

The Norweb Specimen



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

17 1807 Large Stars. O-114. MS-63. Rarity-3.

Strike: Sharp with all stars fully delineated. The border dentils are slightly wider to the right.

Surfaces: Mottled pale gold and russet toning with vivid blue around the periphery. The upper right portion of the obverse is generally slightly lighter than the balance.

Die State: Early. No cracks visible. One very faint set of obverse and reverse clash marks are noted.

Narrative: Very probably the **finest known** example of this variety. Neither Parsley or Herrman mention any examples finer than MS-60. Another truly incredible coin in a collection where *incredible* almost becomes a common word!

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines *all* Capped Bust varieties of the year, not just O-114.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Anthony Terranova, November 21, 1988. Ex Bowers & Merena, Norweb Collection, Part III, November 1988, Lot 3049; previously ex B. Max Mehl November 1954, Lot 204.

The collection of Ambassador and Mrs. R. Henry Norweb had its foundation in the 19th century with Mrs. Norweb's father, Albert Fairchild Holden. Over decades the cabinet was carefully formed with emphasis on quality. In 1987 and 1988 we had the honor of showcasing the collection in a series of three auction sales.

Remarkable Quality 1808/7



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

18 1808/7 O-101. MS-63.

Strike: Very full.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with light gold peripheral toning. A short diagonal field mark is noted on the reverse, parallel to the eagle's left wing.

Die State: Very late with all cracks mentioned by Parsley including the obverse crack from the edge of the "1" which crosses the drapery into Liberty's neck. Four very faint sets of clash marks are visible.

Narrative: The underdate is very sharp and tilts notably to the right. Both top and bottom left serifs of the "7" are visible as are the crossbar in the upper loop and the upright below the inner left curve of the bottom loop. Most certainly Condition Census level, and from the combination of high grade and superb aesthetic appeal it is among the very finest in existence anywhere. Still another incredible coin. One can readily imagine that once this is sold, the opportunity to acquire an 1808/7 of this quality may be lost forever.

PCGS Population: 4; 1 finer, MS-64.

Pedigree: From Stack's, Auction '81, Lot 1555 as "Gem Brilliant Uncirculated."



19 1809 O-102a. MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Fully struck save for stars 9 through 13 which are flat. The horizontal shield lines are complete although weak at the right. Slight reverse dentil weakness is noted from 1:00 to 3:00, opposite stars 11 through 13.

Surfaces: Faint golden brown with a small yellow toning spot on the neck.

Die State: A very faint obverse crack is noted from the rim to 0, curl, curving through hair, B, cap, and to the rim at 11:30. The Overton-Parsley reference suggests that this is a combination of two or three joining cracks. Two reverse cracks are described by Overton-Parsley.

Narrative: Capped Bust half dollars of this date are very elusive in Mint State. Apparently, very few were saved. Although market values do not reflect this, a Mint State 1808 half dollar is at least 100 times rarer than one dated, say, 1831.

PCGS Population: 9; 11 finer, finest is MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-102.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Stack's, May 12, 1978.

In 1808 the Mint struck very few different denominations. According to Mint reports, half cents, cents, half dollars, quarter eagles, and half eagles were struck for a total of \$982,055 face value. Of this amount, 69.7% consisted of half dollars. Some of this coinage may actually have been from dies dated 1807.

Choice 1809 O-107

The Garrett Coin



20 1809 O-107. III Edge. MS-63. Rarity-3.

Strike: Stars 6 and 7 are weak as is the top of the cap. Otherwise, very sharply detailed throughout.

Surfaces: Reflective lustre is visible through pale blue, rose, and gold toning. Full obverse and reverse cartwheels with a faint break in the lustre on Liberty's cheek.

Die State: Early.

Narrative: The half dollar coinage of 1809 was lost to three different edge types. These are the plain lettered edge as normally seen, the XXX lettered edge, and the III lettered edge. These have historically been termed experimental, or trial, edges. In the recently published *Bust Half Fever*, Edgar Souders states that the edge design was altered, arguing that this was not an experimental edge design but some type of repair to the edge bar die. Souders states "one thing is factual; the edges are interesting and there is not an over-abundance of 1809 [Capped Bust halves] surviving that exhibit these characteristics."

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 290. From the Chapman brothers, December 15, 1885.

Philadelphia numismatists S. Hudson Chapman and Henry Chapman were prime suppliers to T. Harrison Garrett and often gave him first chance at important pieces.



21 1810 O-103. MS-63.

Strike: Very slight weakness is noted on the drapery clasp and on the very top edge of the eagle's dexter wing (viewer's left).

Surfaces: Pale gray gradually deepening to steel blue and gold iridescence. The reverse is similarly toned yet lighter in appearance. A few very minor nicks are noted at the central obverse.

Die State: The obverse crack mentioned in Parsley's revision of Al Overton's reference is advanced, yet the chin is quite strong.

Narrative: Half dollars of this year are generally very weakly struck. The vast majority display extreme weakness on the entire dexter wing.

PCGS Population: 11; 3 finer, all MS-64. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: Ex Paramount, Auction '80, Lot 724.

General coinage note: Advanced die states usually are accompanied by die wear (through use) which also contributes to the apparent weakness of strike, especially in the fields and lower-relief areas of the motifs.

Garrett 1811/0 O-101

A.k.a. "Punctuated Date"



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

22 1811/0 Punctuated Date O-101. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Stars 1 through 7 are flat, 8 through 13 progressively sharper. The obverse dentils are bold from 3:00 to 7:00 and weaker elsewhere. Eagle's feathers and shield are fully detailed.

Surfaces: Deep brownish gray with bold blue and amber around. The devices are highlighted in blue.

Die State: Early. No cracks or clash marks visible.

Narrative: Two varieties share this obverse die, known as the Punctuated Date due to a raised dot between the bases of the 8 and second 1. Both varieties are scarce, and in Mint State, quite rare. Steve Herrman's listing of Capped Bust half dollars appearing in auction sales yields just one appearance of both varieties grading better than MS-60.

PCGS Population: Finest certified was MS-63 until this specimen was graded.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 292.



23 1811 Large 8. O-103. MS-62. Rarity-3.

Strike: Generally good although all stars are flat.

Surfaces: Deep blue-green with lighter champagne hues at the centers.

Die State: Extensive obverse and reverse clash marks with a nearly complete outline of the eagle, arrowheads, and olive branch visible on the obverse. The obverse die crack which runs vertically through the date, often seen on this variety, has not yet developed.

Narrative: Walter Breen in his *Encyclopedia* notes that this larger 8 punch was first seen on 1811-dated half dollars and continued in use through the 1818 overdate issues with large 8's.

PCGS Population: 25; 47 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Bareford Collection, October 1981, Lot 349; From New Netherlands, April 27, 1956, privately.



24 1811 Small 8. O-109. MS-64.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Brilliant creamy white lustre.

Die State: A die crack from the reverse rim at 10:00 extends almost to the shield. All die cracks mentioned by Don Parsley in *Early Half Dollar Die Varieties* are prominent.

Narrative: Three basic styles exist for the half dollar coinage of this year. These are the Punctuated Date (also called the 1811/10), the varieties with Large 8 in the date, and those with a Small 8 in the date.

PCGS Population: 11; 4 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 24, 1977.

Notable Uncirculated 1812/1



25 1812/1 Small 8. O-102a. MS-62 (PCGS).

Strike: The stars are mostly weak but not completely flat, with their outer points drawn to the edge. Liberty's ribbon and clasp are weak. The reverse is generally sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous bright white with a nuance of golden brown. Few very minute nicks and marks are noted.

Die State: At least eight sets of clash marks are visible. A die crack connects the base of the second 1 to the upright of the final 1 (under the 2).

Narrative: In *Bust Half Fever*, the author states that true Uncirculated examples of the Small 8 variety are nonexistent, or nearly so (however, he did not have the opportunity to examine the present coin during his studies).

PCGS Population: 1; 3 finer, all MS-63.

Pedigree: Ex *Stack's*, Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1551; ex *Stack's*, March 1978, Lot 317.

Two different obverse dies were overdated this year. One features a large 8 (O-101), is extremely rare, and has the tip of the second 1 pointing very slightly above the center of the 8. The other has a small 8 (O-102) with the tip of the second 1 pointing to the center of the top loop of the 8.



26 1812 O-108. MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Slight weakness at the stars and top of the cap, as well as at the arrowheads on the reverse.

Surfaces: Brilliant white with full cartwheel lustre.

Die State: Intermediate. The obverse and reverse dentilation is weak yet partially visible. The obverse does not show any trace of a die crack sometimes seen at the date. A die crack extends across the scroll and continues across the eagle's head, through the dexter wing, and parallel to the eagle's leg. Additional reverse cracks of O-108a are visible.

Narrative: This intermediate die state is later than that described as O-108, yet earlier than the O-108a sub-variety.

PCGS Population: 29; 24 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 24, 1977.

Gem 1812 O-109a

The Garrett Specimen



27 1812 O-109a. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp and well-centered.

Surfaces: Deep golden russet with blue-green peripheries. A splash of blue is noted in the hair and back of the Liberty cap.

Die State: Reverse defect lumps are quite prominent. The letters ERTY, from LIBERTY, are boldly clash marked in the field along the eagle's body, below the right wing.

Narrative: On page 138 of *Bust Half Fever* a depiction of the position of clash marks is presented. This illustration is described by the author as a "crash course" in the placement of clash marks! With perfect die alignment, the ERTY clash mark should be hidden along the right edge of the shield, rather than in the field.

PCGS Population: 18; 6 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Ex *Bowers & Ruddy Galleries*, Garrett Collection, Part 1, November 1979, Lot 294; from the J. Colvin Randall Collection.

Until recent decades clash marks were poorly understood by numismatists. In his 1929 book on half dollars *M.L. Beistle* gives them the curious appellation of "akcidefect marks," while in 1950, in reference to silver dollars, M.H. Bolender called them "suction marks."

Clash marks were caused when the obverse and reverse die came into high-pressure contact with each other without an intervening planchet.

Famous 50 C./UNI Error

Remarkable Quality



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

28 1813 50C. Over UNI. O-101a. MS-63.

Strike: Stars 6 through 8, drapery clasp, and obverse dentils are all weak.

Surfaces: Predominantly brilliant frosty lustre with a trace of golden brown on the obverse.

Die State: Late. At least three sets of weak clash marks are visible. The reverse die has been lapped in an attempt to remove the engraving blunder. A result is that the blunder is still visible although other details at the bottom of the reverse have been severely weakened.

Narrative: This variety is among the most outstanding die blunders in the early half dollar series, certainly equivalent in popularity to the 1801 Three Errors large cent. The engraver had the die oriented wrong and started punching UNITED at the bottom of the die. After realizing his error, he effaced as much of the faulty lettering as possible before placing the denomination in its rightful position. Among the finest known of this popular variety.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1554; previously from Stack's, December 1977, Lot 433.

Gem 1813 Overton 106

The Garrett Specimen



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

29 1813 O-106. MS-66.

Strike: Slight weakness is apparent at the bust tip and stars 1 and 2. The opposite point of the reverse also shows weakness.

Surfaces: Vibrant blue-green, pale gold, and rose. The edge lettering bleeds into the reverse dentils.

Die State: Perfect obverse and reverse dies.

Narrative: An exquisite gem from the famed Garrett Collection, sold by us to the order of The Johns Hopkins University 1979-1981. This low-mintage date is not particularly scarce in average condition, but must be considered so in Mint State. In grades such as those presently offered, this date along with all other early dates are extreme condition rarities.

PCGS Population: 0; finest is MS-64. (Population combines several varieties of the year, not just O-106.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 295; from the J. Colvin Randall Collection.

Marvelous 1814/3 Gem



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

30 1814/3 O-101a. MS-64.

Strike: Fully struck and well-centered.

Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath faint gray toning mixed with attractive rose and blue.

Die State: All cracks described by Parsley are visible. Several sets of faint clash marks are visible on the obverse and reverse.

Narrative: One of the most prominent overdates in the Capped Bust series, the entire top stroke of the overpunched 3 is visible beneath the upright of the 4.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Bareford Collection, October 1981, Lot 354; From W. Raymond, February 18, 1947, Lot 491; earlier from Thomas Elder, May 19, 1923, Lot 1825.

Superb 1814 Normal Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

31 1814 O-103. MS-65.

Strike: Stars 8 through 12 are weak, the balance stronger. The drapery clasp is also weak. Obverse dentilation is mostly present with that on the left stronger; the reverse dentilation is primarily weak.

Surfaces: Full lustre beneath deeply mottled amber and steel blue toning.

Die State: A prominent crack joins star 5 to the upper lip. Two sets of clash marks are visible. A heavy vertical ridge on the reverse joins the scroll to the left wing. This is diagnostic for the variety.

Narrative: The heavy ridge on the reverse is the result of die damage, probably occurring at the time the die was produced. This is much stronger and straighter than expected for any die crack or clash mark.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, Getty Collection, May 1977, Lot 738.

Gem 1814 Blundered Die

E Over A in STATES



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

32 1814 E Over A in STATES. O-108a. MS-65.

Strike: Extreme peripheral weakness from 1:00 to 4:00.

Surfaces: Satin lustre under attractive gold, rose, and blue toning.

Die State: Very late with many sets of mushy clash marks in various stages of die rotation.

Narrative: Blundered die created by inattentiveness on the part of the engraver. After sinking the letters STAT in the die, the engraver placed another A instead of the appropriate E. Traces of the erroneous A are visible at the crossbar of the E and extending from the right base. A similar blunder occurred earlier on the reverse die of 1806 O-124 (a Rarity-6 variety), and related blunders occur among 1795 half dollars and half eagles.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, both MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Buss Collection, January 1985, Lot 964.

Mint State 1815/2 Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

33 1815/2 O-101. MS-62.

Strike: Bold and well-centered with complete border dentilation.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with smooth golden brown toning. Evenly distributed blue-violet peripheral toning. Very slight friction is noted on the high points. In the 1972 offering of this specimen by Lester Merkin, he described the coin as "pale gold and violet toned Uncirculated." Today the description and photo are virtually identical to the 1972 appearance.

Die State: At least three sets of clash marks are visible however, the die crack described for O-101a is not visible.

Narrative: A truly remarkable specimen of the classic "key date" in the Capped Bust half dollar series, generally available in circulated grades for a price. The typical example seen is in grades from Fine to Extremely Fine with Very Fine being the norm. Lower grades are usually not seen and higher grades, such as this, are very rare.

PCGS Population: 0; 2 finer, both MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, April 1978, Lot 325, previously ex Lester Merkin, February 1972, Lot 153.

Interestingly, the quarter dollar and half dollar were the only silver denominations produced by the Mint this year. No half dollars were struck in the following year, 1816.

Beautiful 1817/3 Overdate



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

34 1817/3 O-101a. MS-62.

Strike: Sharp and well-centered.

Surfaces: Pale gray-brown lustre with light blue peripheral toning. A few scattered marks are consistent with the grade. The right obverse field has a short horizontal scratch which is blended with the toning.

Die State: Several sets of obverse and reverse clash marks are visible. The reverse crack from the rim across ME and down through the tip of the right wing becomes lost among the clash marks below the eagle.

Narrative: An extreme rarity in true Mint State preservation. In his auction survey Steve Herrman lists only three appearances above MS-60 from over 300 catalogues reviewed. Don Parsley in his Condition Census lists only three examples above MS-60. ***PCGS has certified just one MS-61 example with none finer. This cataloguer suggests that exactly four examples of this variety exist grading better than MS-60.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-61.

Pedigree: Ex Pullen and Hanks, May 1981, Lot 342.



35 1817 Punctuated Date (181.7). O-103. MS-63.

Strike: Slightly weak on the eagle's head.

Surfaces: Light cream centers with blue and deep rose peripheral toning. The reverse toning is very faint with a touch of vivid blue around the borders.

Die State: An early die state with the dot between the 1 and 7 plainly visible. No cracks are visible and both obverse and reverse have a single set of clash marks.

Narrative: The die dot on this variety has sometimes been described as an overdate. The reverse die is the identical die used to strike the extremely rare 1817/4 overdate, a variety with just seven examples known.

PCGS Population: 9; 3 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, September 1983, Lot 766.



36 1817 Single Leaf. O-106a. MS-61. Rarity-5 as a sub-variety.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Pale gold becomes very deep along the reverse border. Darker toning crosses the eagle's head and upper shield.

Die State: Vertical lines below Liberty's ear are clash marks from the shield. The reverse dentilation varies from weak to indistinguishable, a result of die wear or lapping. A die crack crosses the left wing through the tops of UNITED.

Narrative: The single leaf sub-variety was the result of a reverse die drastically lapped (polished) to remove die damage. As a result, the uppermost leaf below the eagle's wing was also removed.

As the date listing of the James Bennett Pryor Collection progresses, the more remarkable the cabinet becomes. In very few instances in American numismatic history has such an impressive array of Mint State half dollar dates and overdates been offered.

PCGS Population: 3; 26 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-106.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Sheridan Downey, III, September 19, 1988.



37 1817 Wide Date. O-113a. MS-61.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre. A few faint hairlines are noted, primarily on the reverse below the scroll.

Die State: Extensive die cracks are described by Don Parsley. The right obverse field has a number of tiny rust marks. Two faint sets of clash marks are present.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of this popular date.

PCGS Population: 3; 26 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-113.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 24, 1977.

Coinage dies, made of steel, are subject to rust just like any other steel product. This die rust creates tiny pit marks in the surface of the die which are then transferred to the coin in the form of tiny raised dots of metal. Rust marks are very easy to view on the coin's surface when a coin is this nicely preserved. A problem only arises when attempting to distinguish between rust marks (which are raised) and porosity (which is recessed) on the surface of lower grade coins; magnification is sometimes necessary.



38 1818/7 Large 8. O-101. AU-58.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant with a faint trace of gold. Aside from a minute touch of wear, this lovely coin has no significant defects.

Die State: The obverse has a faint crack from the border, through star 11, and to the hair curls. The reverse is perfect.

Narrative: Al Overton, and later Don Parsley, listed the early half dollars with the basic "Overton" numbers and went on to describe significant die states with the same number followed by a lower case "a" and, occasionally, "b." In the case of this variety, the obverse matches the description for the O-101a sub-variety while the reverse, in the perfect die state, meets the requirements for the O-101 variety. This variety, therefore, has at least three distinct die states: State I with obverse and reverse of O-101, State II with obverse of O-101a and reverse of O-101, and State III with obverse and reverse of O-101a.

PCGS Population: 5; 7 finer, finest MS-63. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Pullen and Hanks, May 1981, Lot 343. Earlier from the Hope Ranch Collection between 1863 and 1908.

Gem 1818/7 Overdate



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

39 1818/7 Small 8. O-102a. MS-64.

Strike: All details are sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous rose-brown with vivid blue around the borders.

Die State: The upper loop of the second 8 has a die crack filling most of this area.

Narrative: As a group the three overdate varieties of 1818 are very popular for two basic reasons.

First, they are common enough that an example can be found without a difficult search and without spending a large sum.

Second, they are visible without magnification. Despite this, examples in choice or gem Mint State preservation are quite difficult to find. In MS-63 or better grade, Don Parsley only lists seven examples for all three varieties and Steve Herrman only enumerates three auction appearances.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-63. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-102.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, August 26, 1987.



40 1818 Close Date. O-107. MS-64.

Strike: Sharp except star 8 which is flat.

Surfaces: Fully white with frosty lustre.

Die State: Early, no clash marks or cracks are noted.

Narrative: In *Bust Half Fever* Edgar Souders calls this the "Cocked T" variety due to the first T in STATES being canted to the left. He informs readers that this is one of his favorite 1818 varieties.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-107.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, June 21, 1977.

Gem 1818 O-112



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

41 1818 Close Date. O-112. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Slight weakness is visible on the eagle's head and top edge of the right (viewer's left) wing.

Surfaces: Multi-lined with gold, rose, violet, blue, and green, all attractively blended together.

Die State: Early, no clash marks are visible. Cracked from the reverse rim at 6:00 curving to the left. This crack joins the bottom of

the 5, tips of the olive leaves, tops of UNI, and to the rim over D.

Narrative: Half dollars dated 1818 are generally quite common, the first common date of the Capped Bust series. Quite possibly, bank reserve storage of half dollars began in a significant way about this time. In Mint State grades, however, any 1818 half dollar is quite scarce.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-112.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 774.



42 1819/8 Small 9. O-101. MS-62.

Strike: Full and well-centered.

Surfaces: Light gold gradually changes to deep blue-green with pale amber and violet peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A common variety within the context of its era although generally not encountered in such a high state of preservation.

PCGS Population: 6; 13 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1984, Lot 581, previously ex Stack's, May 1972, Lot 993.

Gem 1819/8 O-104



43 1819/8 Large 9. O-104. MS-64.

Strike: Full and sharply detailed.

Surfaces: Pale golden brown with blue and lilac peripheral toning.

Die State: Early. Very faint clash marks and no die cracks.

Narrative: Six distinctively different overdate varieties exist for this year, the largest number of overdated varieties in any single coinage year of the series. In 1818 the Mint did not properly "plan ahead" when making dies, and many remained unused by year's end.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, both MS-65. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-104.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 777.

Gem 1819 Normal Date

The Garrett Specimen



44 1819 Close Date. O-107. MS-64. Rarity-3.

Strike: Full. Well-centered.

Surfaces: Lilac toning at the center of the obverse blending to gold and blue at the periphery. The reverse shows light blue and gray patina.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Another common date except when in Mint State preservation as offered here. With six different overdates and nine additional normal dies, we would classify this coinage as quite interesting.

PCGS Population: 1 with none finer. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-107.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 303; from the J. Colvin Randall Collection.



45 1820/19 Flat-base 2. O-101. MS-61.

Strike: Full, well-centered.

Surfaces: Satin pale gold lustre with lilac, blue, and green peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The fourth consecutive year with overdated coinage.

PCGS Population: 1; 4 finer, finest MS-64. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1984, Lot 584, previously from Stack's, Reed Hawn sale, August 1973, Lot 55.



46 1820/19 Curve-base 2. O-102. MS-63.

Strike: Stars 3 through 7 are weak. The reverse shows weakness at the claws and stem end. Otherwise, all design details are bold.

Surfaces: Lustrous surfaces beneath pale russet and steel toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Four distinctively different style 2's were used on the dies of 1820. These have either a curve-base 2 or a flat-base 2. Further examination yields that the flat-base 2 comes in variations

with a curl top and a knobbed top. Still further, the flat-base 2 with curl top exists in a small format and a large format.

PCGS Population: 0; 2 finer, both MS-64. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-102.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 781.



47 1820 Close Large Date. O-106. MS-62 (PCGS).

Strike: Lower stars are generally flat with all remaining design details full.

Surfaces: Pale gold gradually changes to violet and blue along the borders. Satin lustre and highly attractive.

Die State: One faint set of obverse and reverse clash marks is visible.

Narrative: With a mintage of 751,122 coins, this coinage year has the third lowest production figure of the entire Capped Bust series (although it is likely that die-date use did not completely follow calendar years). The others are 1807 with a slightly lower 750,500 and 1815 with just 47,150. Every other year featured mintages over the one million mark.

PCGS Population: 1; 4 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-106.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Parsons, March 7, 1989.



48 1820 Close Large Date. O-108. MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Very sharp.

Surfaces: Splendid lustre with delicate russet, pale violet, and light blue iridescent toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The value guides list 1820-dated half dollars at a moderate premium over the common dates. Considering the true scarcity of these coins, especially in high grades, the listed prices should be much higher. As with many half dollars in the present offering, opportunity is the true key to value.

In the July 1994 edition of the *John Reich Journal*, member Glenn R. Peterson, M.D., reported on the attribution of a hoard of 1,166 previously unstudied Bust halves. This group featured only one example of the 1820 coinage year! No examples were present for 1807 or 1815 and just three for 1814. At the other end of the spectrum, the years in the 1830s were widely represented, with an average of 83 coins per year.

PCGS Population: 1; 3 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 783.



49 1821 O-105a. MS-64.

Strike: Full and well-centered.

Surfaces: Lovely satin lustre with pale gold toning changing to deep amber around the periphery.

Die State: A die crack, beginning at the tops of TAT, joins several letters to the right and left. One faint clash mark is visible on the reverse.

Narrative: Very undervalued in the current price guides, half dollars dated 1821 are quite elusive, especially in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 3; 4 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-105.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Edward Lee, February 1, 1979.



50 1821 O-107. MS-64 (PCGS). Rarity-4.

Strike: Generally full with slight weakness on a few stars.

Surfaces: Primarily brilliant satiny lustre with faint golden brown toning. The reverse fields are deeply mirrored.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Another lovely Mint State example of this rare and undervalued date. Steve Herrman lists only five examples of this variety graded better than MS-60. Russell Logan's Condition Census of 48 collections, published in the January 1994 edition of the *John Reich Journal*, notes 38 examples of this variety with an average grade of (VF)37. One coin was reported as MS-65.

PCGS Population: 3; 4 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-107.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 5, 1979.

Note: Inasmuch as market prices for Capped Bust half dollars are largely based upon "types," there are many opportunities to acquire issues that range from much scarcer to rare, but at only a slight advance over the "type" price.



51 "1822/1" O-101. MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Well struck and well-centered.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with light amber peripheral toning. A few very minor hairlines are noted to the right of the eagle's head. Very slight planchet roughness is visible around OF AM.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The so-called overdate. Recent theory indicates this may not be an actual overdated die but simply a damaged punch.

Dr. Ivan B. Leaman, a prominent member of the Bust Half Nut Club (an organization of numismatists who specialize in the varieties of this series), has studied this issue to great lengths and feels that the "overdate" is actually some type of extra metal in the punch used for the date. On the other hand, the certification services recognize it, as did Walter Breen in his *Encyclopedia*.

PCGS Population: 5; 1 finer, MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from Richard Gross, February 1, 1985.



52 1822 Button On Cap. O-107. MS-64.

Strike: The drapery clasp and a few stars are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Pale golden gray with faint blue iridescence.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The "button" is on the folded down portion of the cap directly above BE of LIBERTY. This is apparently the only variety of the Capped Bust half dollar series with this feature.

PCGS Population: 10; 4 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-107.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Floyd Farley, May 13, 1983.



53 1822 O-113. MS-64. Rarity-3.

Strike: Full and well-centered.

Surfaces: Deep russet with violet and bright iridescent blue peripheral toning. A few very minor planchet striations are noted over the eagle's head.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Edgar Souders notes that either the scroll or the bust tip will be weak. On this example, as on many from the Pryor Collection, both features appear strong.

PCGS Population: 10; 4 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-113.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 789.



54 1823 Broken 3. O-101. AU-55. Rarity-3.

Strike: Generally nice with a strong double profile. (See Lot 62.)

Surfaces: Frosty white lustre with traces of gold peripheral toning. Slight rub on the high points. A few minor nicks and hairlines, as expected in association with the slight handling.

Die State: Very faint clash marks on the reverse.

Narrative: The various states of the 3 punch have given rise to the names Broken 3, Patched 3, Ugly 3, and Normal 3. In days past, some have even referred to these as overdates. Do the names really portray the situation with accuracy or are they, perhaps, fanciful descriptions dreamed up by a past numismatist? Walter Breen described these in the following manner: Broken 3 has a minute gap between the two halves of the digit. Ugly 3 has the middle cusp of the 3 broken off and has crumbling behind the 3. Patched 3 also has crumbling behind the 3 yet the cusp is intact.

PCGS Population: Unspecified by variety; population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1575.

Edgar Souders, in *Bust Half Fever*, provides a lengthy discussion of these variations that is well worth reading.

Gem 1823 Patched 3



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

55 1823 Patched 3. O-101a. MS-65.

Strike: Most stars, as well as the drapery clasp, are weak. URI and A of STATES are slightly weak yet remain visible. Border dentilation is complete.

Surfaces: Deep gray with faint steel blue. A thin diagonal scratch on Liberty's bust is hidden by the toning.

Die State: No cracks. A single set of clash marks is visible on the reverse only.

Narrative: Again referring to Edgar Souders' *Bust Half Fever*, a book we highly recommend (and which is available from our Publications Department), we find photos of the Broken 3, Patched 3, and Ugly 3 along with a brief history and explanation of each.

PCGS Population: 1, none finer. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 792.



56 1823 O-106a. MS-64.

Strike: Mostly sharp. A few star centers are not completely full.

Surfaces: Brilliant frosty lustre with very faint gold and blue peripheral toning. A few minor obverse abrasions and a small area of roughness left of the eagle's head are all that detract.

Die State: A thin die crack connects stars 11 through 13 to the lowest curl. The reverse is perfect.

Narrative: Al Overton noted that the 3 in the date has been repaired, but stated that this obverse is not the same as the "Patched 3" obverse die. Walter Breen, on the other hand, referred to this as a "Patched 3" variety in his *Encyclopedia* listing number 4647.

PCGS Population: 11; 1 finer, MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-106.)

Pedigree: Ex NASCA, July 1981, Lot 713.



57 1823 Ugly 3. O-110a. MS-63.

Strike: Stars 5 and 6 are weak, otherwise fully detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant satiny lustre with faint violet and deep blue peripheral toning. A rim flaw is present on the reverse, over OF.

Die State: As described for O-110a. A die crack from the border connects the 3 to the lowest curl. On the reverse a crack encircles the eagle from the border below the olive leaves, through the wing tip, eagle's head, right wing, arrows, denomination, and back to the border.

Narrative: This die combination was used to produce coins with a normal 3 in the date, known as O-110. The obverse die was then "repaired" to strengthen the 3 and has been named the "Ugly 3," known as O-110a. Just why a Mint employee decided to repunch the 3 is unknown.

PCGS Population: 34; 12 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-110.)

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales, October 1979, Lot 403.



58 1823 Normal 3. O-111. MS-64.

Strike: Stars 6, 12, and 13 are weak at their centers. Slight weakness is visible at the top of the left wing.

Surfaces: Bright and frosty lustre.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The 3 in the date is normal, not broken, patched, or even ugly!

PCGS Population: 11; 1 finer, MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-111.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Manfra, Tordella & Brookes, August 24, 1977.

Incredible 1824/1 O-101



59 1824/1 O-101. MS-64.

Strike: Full and well-centered.

Surfaces: White satin lustre with a crescent of rose, gold, and blue. The toning is most prevalent from 6:00 to 10:00 on the obverse and from 7:00 to 11:00 on the reverse. A few faint scattered marks are noted.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Several distinct varieties or variety groups exist for this coinage year. Included are the overdate, the 1824 "over various dates," the recut date, and the normal date. The overdate and recut date variety groups can be difficult to distinguish. The 1824/1 overdate is identified by slight doubling along the top right upright of the 4 and the addition of a point out of the left top of the 4, extending slightly into the field. The recut date, on the other hand, shows doubling at the top left portion of the diagonal of the 4 and appears as a parallel line in the field, following this diagonal. Careful examination of the close-up photos above and at the next two lots will help identify these distinct varieties.

PCGS Population: 4; none finer. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex NASCA, July 1981, Lot 730.

Spectacular 1824 Overdate "Over Various Dates"



60 1824 Over Various Dates. O-103. MS-65.

Strike: Stars 1 through 8 are weak. On the reverse, C. and the lower arrowheads show weakness.

Surfaces: Evenly mixed russet, blue, and pale gray. A small nick on the cheek is barely consequential.

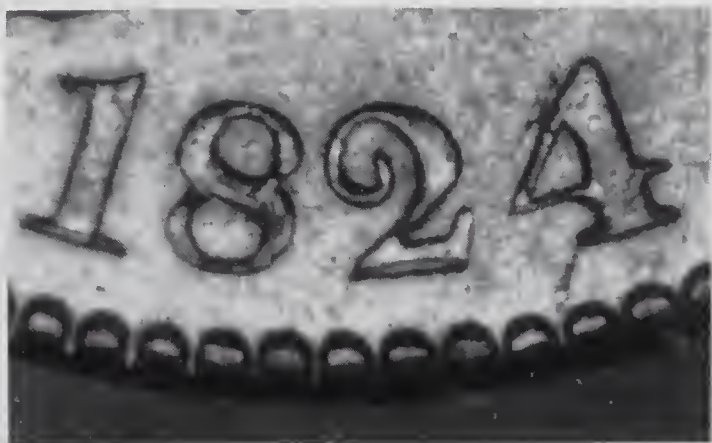
Die State: Early. No cracks, a faint single clash mark is visible on the obverse only.

Narrative: Just what is this overdate? In *Bust Half Fever*, Edgar Souders writes "This overdate has been referred to as the 1824/2/1, 1824/2/0, 1824/20/19 and 1824/2/3. Then too, someone came up with the term 1824/Various Dates which is a safe way for one to say, 'I don't have any idea!' Over the last several years I have examined over a dozen examples of this curious half dollar in varying states of preservation. I feel conclusively that these coins are 1824/2/0's. Your view may differ, but I believe the evidence points to these underfigures."

Perhaps a researcher with access to proper photographic and computer equipment could engage in a study of the various possibilities. Necessary tools would include good close-up photographs of the various possible date elements and a computer program allowing analysis of these elements through an overlay process.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-64. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 799.



61 1824/4 O-109. MS-63.

Strike: Stars 4 through 7, 12, and 13 are weak.

Surfaces: Slightly reflective satin lustre. The obverse is pale silver gray surrounded by blue and violet iridescence. The reverse centers are pale gold with vivid blue and violet iridescence.

Die State: The ridge up from the right talon appears to be a clash mark from details of the cap. Die filing marks extend up to the right from dentils below the date.

Narrative: Properly a recut 4 in the date, this variety has occasionally been mis-identified as the 4 over 1 overdate. Examination of the close-up photos of this and the overdate variety, above, will distinguish between them.

PCGS Population: 6; 4 finer, all MS-64. (Population combines all overdate varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1578.



62 1824 Plain 2. O-112. MS-64. Rarity-4.

Strike: Triple profile. Stars 4 through 6 are slightly weak as are the talons and stem end on the reverse.

Surfaces: Very attractive satiny lustre under vivid gold, violet, blue, and amber toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A splendid specimen with excellent definition of the multiple profiles.

PCGS Population: 19; 8 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all Normal Date varieties of the year, not just O-112.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 800.

Double and triple profiles are common among the half dollars of this era. The vast majority of these striking variations are noted for the years 1823, 1824, and 1825 although examples are known for most other years of the Capped Bust series. Among large cents (another denomination with frequently seen double profiles), common years are generally in the early 1830s. Double profiles are generally seen on the obverse, thus the given name. As the coinage press became old, the die shaft would gain some play thus, when striking, the obverse die would shift slightly sideways creating the obverse doubling. The reverse die, known as the anvil die, was stationary in these presses, thus no reverse doubling is noted.

Superb 1824 Normal Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

63 1824 Fancy 2. O-113. MS-65.

Strike: Most stars have weak centers and the drapery clasp is flat. Otherwise, well-centered and fully detailed.

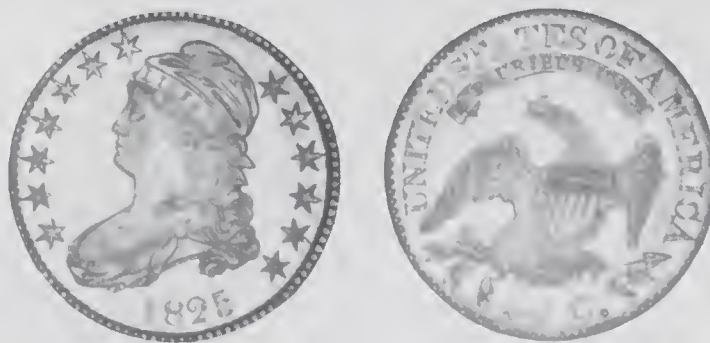
Surfaces: Fully lustrous with rose, steel blue, and bright violet patina. A small planchet defect is visible on the neck.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: One of many important opportunities for the serious collector. Design type collectors have many chances to fill a hole with a gem. Collectors by date may want to bid on several different issues to fill some holes. Those who pursue major varieties will certainly find many items of interest while the die variety specialist will simply be amazed at the quality of some scarce and rare marriages.

PCGS Population: 5; 3 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all Normal Date varieties of the year, not just O-113.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Greg Holloway, August 24, 1977. Ex Lester Merkin.



64 1825 O-105. AU-58, prooflike.

Strike: Fully detailed except for very slight weakness on the top edges of each wing.

Surfaces: Faint gold toning. Fully prooflike fields with very minor hairlines.

Die State: Early.

Narrative: An attractive specimen in all respects.

Pedigree: Unknown.

Beginning January 1, 1825, drinking, smoking, and profanity were inadmissible at the Mint. The former employee allowance for "drink money" was replaced by an additional wage of three dollars per month for the three summer months. This information is from "Rules and Regulations Adopted for the Mint, January 1, 1825," extracted and published in *Bust Half Fever*.

Incredible 1825 O-109

Possibly Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

65 1825 Plain 2. O-109. MS-64 (PCGS). Rarity-5.

Strike: Generally sharp although stars 8 through 13 are flat and the clasp is weak.

Surfaces: The obverse is prooflike with golden rose peripheral toning. The reverse has satin lustre with steel blue peripheral toning. Very minor hairlines are visible in the left obverse field.

Die State: No die cracks or clash marks are apparent. All stars are lightly drawn to the edge.

Narrative: A PCGS-graded MS-62 sold for over \$4,200 in Sheridan Downey's mail bid sale of April 1991. Steve Herrman reports just two auction appearances of Mint State coins, Don Parsley reports one MS-65 and three MS-60, while Russell Logan lists 24 coins with an average grade of (VF)28 and a high of just AU-50.

PCGS Population: 30; 5 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, February 1, 1979.



66 1826 Fancy 2. O-118a. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Stars 6 through 9 are weak.

Surfaces: Bright frosty lustre with pale gold iridescence at the borders.

Die State: Die cracks join the tops of NITED STATES and MERICA.

Narrative: One of six Capped Bust half dollar coinage years in which the half dollar was the only silver coin minted. The others are 1808, 1810, 1812, 1813, and 1817. Edgar Souders includes the 1815/12 issue among these (although no other overdated 1815 silver coinage was issued in this coinage year, perfect date quarter dollars were struck).

PCGS Population: 41; 14 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-118.)

Pedigree: Ex Mid-American, September 1988, Lot 1535.

Gem 1827/6 O-103



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

67 1827/6 O-103. MS-64. Rarity-4.

Strike: Peripheral weakness on the obverse dentils which are faintly visible only from 5:00 to 10:00. The reverse dentils are weak but mostly visible except from 2:00 to 4:00.

Surfaces: Subdued lustre with deep steel blue and violet mixed with light amber. A few minor marks are noted on the cheek.

Die State: The stars, date, and reverse legend are all drawn to the border. One set of faint clash marks are noted on the reverse.

Narrative: This obverse die was struck in combination with three different reverse dies, creating three overdate varieties. All are scarce in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer. (Population combines *all three* overdate varieties of the year, not just O-103.)

Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 805.*



68 1827 Flat-base 2. O-105. MS-64 (PCGS). Rarity-3.

Strike: Fully detailed except all stars are flat.

Surfaces: Bright satiny lustre. A faint vertical scratch crosses the scroll and eagle's head.

Die State: Minor clash marks from the reverse shield are visible at Liberty's ear.

Narrative: A superb, highly attractive and choice example for the type collector or variety specialist.

PCGS Population: 19; 6 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines *all* varieties of the year, not just O-105.)

Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, February 1988, Lot 1769.*



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Superb Gem 1827 O-114

Possibly Finest Known

69 1827 Flat-base 2. O-114. MS-65. Rarity-4.

Strike: Stars, drapery clasp, left talon, and lowest olive leaf are all weak. Just a trace of obverse dentils are visible from 11:00 around to 4:00.

Surfaces: Frosty lustre with pale golden gray patina changing to light blue-green at the borders.

Die State: No die cracks or clash marks are visible. The stars are drawn to the edge.

Narrative: One of the scarce 1827 varieties.

PCGS Population: 4; 2 finer, both MS-66. (Population combines *all* varieties of the year, not just O-114.)

Pedigree: *Ex Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, May 1977, Lot 892.*

With 49 die varieties identified, this coinage year has more *scarce and rare* varieties than any other coinage year has even *basic* varieties. The years 1828, 1830, 1832, and 1836 each have 23 varieties while 1827 has 27 varieties rated Rarity-4 or higher.

70 1827 Curve-base 2. O-147. MS-65. Rarity-4.

Strike: Most stars are flat and the drapery clasp is extremely weak.

Surfaces: Deep steel blue with pale gray on the obverse. The reverse is bright blue-green with an area of light silver. Satiny lustre is hiding beneath the toning.

Die State: No clash marks or cracks. All stars are drawn to the edge.

Narrative: The year 1827 is the most variety extensive in the Capped Bust series, due no doubt to its record total production of 5,493,400 coins. With a total of 49 varieties currently known, only *two* have the curve-base 2 in the date. Both of these share the same obverse die, with this variety being substantially scarcer than the O-146 variety.

PCGS Population: 4; 2 finer, both MS-66. (Population combines *all* varieties of the year, not just O-147; thus the chances of a specific die variety being in high grade are very small.)

Pedigree: *Ex Stack's, October 1981, Lot 376; from New Netherlands, April 27, 1956, privately.*

Mint State 1827 O-147 With Curve-Base 2



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

The Norweb 1828 O-119

Small Letters Reverse



71 1828 Curve-base 2, O-101. MS-64.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Bright frosty white lustre.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Several variations of the date punches exist for the half dollar coinage of 1828. Small and Large 8's were used while curve-base and square-base 2's were employed. The curve-base 2's exist with Pointed tops or Knobbed tops. The various combinations include curve-base, pointed-top 2, large 8; curve-base, knobbed-top 2, large 8; square-base 2, large 8; and square-base 2, Small 8.

PCGS Population: 22; 6 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Purchased from Fred Weinberg, May 13, 1977.



72 1828 Large 8's, Square-base 2, O-108. MS-64. Rarity-3.

Strike: Sharply detailed although most of the stars are flat.

Surfaces: Frosty white with a trace of rose and blue peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A two-variety type issue. 1828-dated half dollars with square-base, knobbed 2 and large 8's exist only for the O-108 and O-109 die combinations.

PCGS Population: 22; 6 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Ex Heritage, 1985 ANA, Lot 1273.



73 1828 Small 8's, Square-base 2, O-118. MS-63. Rarity-3.

Strike: Well struck with virtually all stars finely detailed. Slight weakness is visible on the eagle's left wing.

Surfaces: Lovely surfaces with satiny lustre. Very attractive golden brown, lilac, and pale blue toning.

Die State: One very faint set of clash marks is visible on the reverse.

PCGS Population: 40; 28 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-118.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Ebsen Collection, June 1987, Lot 1399.



74 1828 Small 8's, Square-base 2, Small Letters. O-119. MS-62. Rarity-3.

Strike: Stars are mostly sharp. The hair curls and drapery clasp are slightly weak. Well-centered.

Surfaces: Light silver gray surfaces at the center, change to mottled blue and rose iridescence at the borders. Minor marks are visible on the cheek.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A separate "type coin," this is the only 1828 variety which exists with small reverse lettering.

PCGS Population: 44; 68 finer, finest MS-66. (This information pertains to all 1828 half dollars, not to the scarce Small Letters reverse.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, Norweb Collection, Part III, November 1988, Lot 3093.



75 1829/7 O-101a. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Boldly detailed although stars 6 through 8 are weak.

Surfaces: Golden brown with a trace of violet and blue at the borders.

Die State: As described by Don Parsley. The reverse die has been lapped with much lower design detail polished off the die.

Narrative: Correctly identified as an 1829 over 27 overdate, this variety has been mis-identified as 1829 over 21 in the past. One of the less popular overdates in the series, this variety is relatively easy to locate in most grades, yet difficult in full Mint State preservation. Steve Herrman lists 13 auction appearances at the MS-60 or higher grade level.

PCGS Population: 2; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Paramount, Auction '81, Lot 1216.



76 1829 O-108. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Stars 8 through 12 are flat with slight weakness on the upper curls. On the reverse, PLU is weak but visible. The eagle's feathers on either side of the shield are weak, as is the right talon.

Surfaces: Mottled pale gold, steel blue, and gray. Fully satin lustre.

Die State: Perfect dies.

PCGS Population: 16; 3 finer, all MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Ex Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, May 1977, Lot 952.



77 1829 O-112. MS-63.

Strike: Stars 6 and 7 are weak, otherwise all details are sharp.

Surfaces: A tiny horizontal planchet striation is noted below the eagle's left wing. Described as follows in the Buddy Ebsen catalogue:

"The obverse is beautifully toned with a vivid blending of rainbow colors, which include champagne gold, violet, and sea green. The reverse is mostly white and exhibits a touch of golden tone about the extreme borders."

Die State: Perfect dies.

PCGS Population: 28; 19 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-112.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Ebsen Collection, June 1987, Lot 1406.



78 1830 Small 0. O-107. MS-63.

Strike: Bold and well-centered.

Surfaces: Mellow white lustre with a hint of gold. Very minor obverse hairlines on slightly reflective fields.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Most 1830 half dollars have a small 0 in the date, such as the coin offered here. One variety exists with a medium 0, and four exist with a large 0 as in the next lot.

PCGS Population: 63; 43 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-107.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, January 14, 1978.

Lovely 1830 O-120

Large 0 In Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

79 1830 Large 0. O-120. MS-65.

Strike: Well detailed with only stars 1, 2, and 7 flat.

Surfaces: Pale golden orange changing to violet and blue peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Very common as a variety yet uncommon in choice Mint State preservation. Don Parsley records just four examples of this variety above MS-60.

PCGS Population: 5; 1 finer, MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-120.)

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1984, Lot 632; earlier from Stack's, March 1958, Lot 1223.

Gem 1831 O-109



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

80 1831 O-109. MS-65.

Strike: All stars are flat. On the reverse, LUR is slightly weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with faint amber toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Regardless of rarity for a given variety, any Capped Bust half dollar in gem or superb gem Mint State must be considered a rarity.

PCGS Population: 5; none finer. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-109.)

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, January 3, 1978.



81 1832 Large Letters. O-101. MS-63.

Strike: Most stars are flat.

Surfaces: Frosty satin lustre with pale gold, violet, and blue toning.

Die State: The diagnostic reverse break is quite heavy but only faintly connected to the olive leaves.

Narrative: The reverse die damage can properly be termed a die break. Generally, die cracks are noted on the internal portion of the die and die breaks, also popularly known as *cuds*, are confined

to the rim.

PCGS Population: 49; 32 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)

Pedigree: Ex Steve Ivy, August 1983, Lot 3465.



82 1832 O-122. MS-64.

Strike: Stars are mostly flat. LUR is weak yet visible.

Surfaces: Superior Galleries described the coin as follows:

"Both the obverse and reverse are extremely frosty and enhanced by superb coloring. On the obverse, the high spots are splashed with violet coloring and framed by reddish gold at the edges; the reverse shows some light pastel coloring at the centers which changes to a deeper reddish gold and pale green at the edges. The underlying surfaces are abundantly lustrous and very clean."

Die State: Perfect dies.

PCGS Population: 26; 6 finer, finest MS-66. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-122; thus, the chances of a specific variety being in high grade are very small.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1989, Lot 4458.



83 1833 O-102. MS-64.

Strike: Sharply detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with a trace of pale gold. Few scattered marks are visible.

Die State: A die crack, or scratch, extends down to the left from the bottom of 0 in 50 C. and reaches the border below the space between 5 and 0.

Narrative: On this reverse die the fourth crossbar from the bottom extends into the left wing. Horizontal and vertical shield lines are often found to extend outside the edges of the shield, leading to Edgar Souders' theory that these individual lines were engraved directly on the working die of each reverse. On the other hand Q. David Bowers suggests that the shield stripes were probably in the master die and hand strengthened, as needed, with each working die, at least on the larger denominations (minor differences abound among Liberty Seated silver dollars, for example, and are sometimes used to help identify dies, the 1851 dollars being an example).

PCGS Population: 18; 4 finer, finest MS-67. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-102.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, October 1978, Lot 1272; from Superior Galleries, Ruby sale, Part III, February 1975, Lot 715.



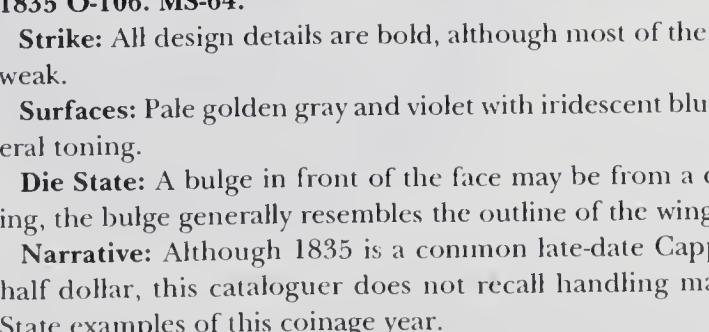
- 84 **1834 Small Date and Letters. O-110. MS-64. Rarity-4.**
Strike: Stars 1 through 8 and the drapery clasp are weak. Otherwise all details are sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant frosty lustre with a wisp of heather toning.
Die State: A die crack circles the reverse as described by Don Parsley.
Narrative: 1834-dated half dollars are known with large date and large letters; large date and small letters; and small date and small letters. No known varieties combine a small date with large letters.
PCGS Population: 51; 8 finer, all MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-110.)
Pedigree: Purchased from Mike Kliman, May 13, 1977. Ex Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, May 1977, Lot 1053.



- 85 **1834 Head of 1835. O-111. MS-63 (PCGS).**
Strike: Mostly bold with a few stars weak.
Surfaces: Satin, slightly reflective surfaces with mottled golden brown, blue, and violet patina.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Overton's "Child's Head."
PCGS Population: 71; 59 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-111.)
Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Ebsen Collection, June 1987, Lot 1436.



- 86 **1835 O-106. MS-64.**
Strike: All design details are bold, although most of the stars are weak.
Surfaces: Pale golden gray and violet with iridescent blue peripheral toning.
Die State: A bulge in front of the face may be from a die clashing, the bulge generally resembles the outline of the wing.
Narrative: Although 1835 is a common late-date Capped Bust half dollar, this cataloguer does not recall handling many Mint State examples of this coinage year.
PCGS Population: 7; none finer. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-106.)
Pedigree: Purchased from Ed Hipps, February 16, 1985.



- 88 **1836 "Over 1836." O-108. MS-63.**
Strike: Sharply struck.

Superb 1836 O-101

Breen's 1836/4 Overdate



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 87 **1836 O-101. MS-65.**
Strike: Fully struck.
Surfaces: Satiny lustre with grayish silver at the centers gradually changing to violet and steel blue.
Die State: A faint die crack from the reverse rim at 8:00 to wing tip and then to the olive leaves.
Narrative: Breen's 1836/4 overdate, one of several varieties so described. Seven different varieties have a small horizontal extension on the right side of the 6. These have been labeled as overdates by some enthusiasts, although the evidence for overdate status is not sufficient for other specialists.
PCGS Population: 1; none finer. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-101.)
Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 831.
 In American numismatics what is an overdate and what is not has often been a matter of debate, and the status of certain "overdates," particularly the most subtle ones, sometimes changes; examples of dethroned overdates include the erstwhile 1865/4 and 1869/8 cents and the 1889/8 half dollar; also see earlier comment under the "1822/1" half dollar.



Surfaces: Frosty mint lustre with very clean surfaces. Silver gray obverse with lighter gold reverse.

Die State: A die crack at the base of the date is very faint.

Narrative: A curious engraving mistake. The engraver thought he had the punch for an 8 but picked up the 3 punch instead. They certainly look alike. After realizing his error, the 8 was punched over the 3 covering all but the knobs of the 3 inside the loops of the 8. An error deserving of wider recognition than is presently given to it.

PCGS Population: 40; 21 finer, finest MS-65. (Population combines all varieties of the year, not just O-108.)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Ebsen Collection, June 1987, Lot 1443.

Mint State 1836 O-116

50 over 00 Variety



89 1836 50/00. O-116. MS-62.

Strike: The stars are flat. The top of 50 C. and the stem are also flat.

Surfaces: A few scattered marks. Golden brown with bright blue iridescence.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A classic blundered die in the early half dollar series. The engraver, in the process of placing the denomination in the die, chose the wrong punch and placed a "0" in the position of the "5". After realizing his mistake, he punched the die with the "5" punch on top of the "0" and continued with the proper punches.

PCGS Population: 1; 3 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Donald Brigandi, February 1, 1985.

This variety was not widely known until it was publicized by New Netherlands Coin Co. (Charles M. Wormser and John J. Ford, Jr.) in the 1950s.

1836-1837 CAPPED BUST ISSUES

50 CENTS REVERSE, REEDED EDGE

As the railroad took hold in this country (effectively eclipsing the rising star of the canal industry in America), speculation over land needs led to President Andrew Jackson's *Specie Circular* which mandated that all land purchases would be paid for in gold or silver only. The confusing bank situation of the Jackson administration led to the Panic of 1837. Banks in

nearly all major cities suspended specie payments May 10, 1837, and by the end of the year 618 banks had failed. Martin Van Buren pledged, as president, to follow in the footsteps of his "illustrious predecessor," as noted in the inscription on many Hard Times tokens of the era. These were wild and woolly days on the political scene, and the numerous tokens and scrip notes of the era reflect the turmoil.

Arkansas was admitted to the Union in 1836, the Alamo fell to Mexican troops; later these Mexican troops were defeated by Sam Houston, and the Republic of Texas was founded. The S.S. *Beaver* became the first steamship to operate on the Pacific coast of America and was powered by Boulton & Watt engines.

Overseas, 18-year-old Queen Victoria began her 64-year reign in England, a span which became known as the Victorian era.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Robert Maskell Patterson was in charge and Christian Gobrecht had recently been hired as engraver. The second Philadelphia Mint building, with steam power installed in late 1836, was in use, and branch mints were under construction in New Orleans, Charlotte, and Dahlonega.

Finest Certified 1836 Reeded Edge



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

90 1836 Reeded Edge. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Frosty, partially prooflike, lustre. Pale blue and champagne toning on the reverse.

Die State: "50 CENTS" is slightly doubled below. The reverse crack from the rim into the field at 12:00, just right of S, is very faint.

Narrative: 207.8 grains. Struck at the 208-grain standard of earlier years. In his *Complete Encyclopedia*, Walter Breen mentions a study performed by noted numismatic researcher Carl W.A. Carlson (whose reference collection we sold at auction in 1995) regarding the existence of these coins at two different weight standards. Examples have apparently been recorded at the 208 grain standard of 1836 and earlier years and at the 206.25 grain standard of 1837 and later years. The difficulty with this determination involves the Mint tolerance of (plus or minus) 1.5 grains which could allow examples to fall within the tolerance limit of either specification.

PCGS Population: 1 certified MS-64 prior to the advent of the present specimen.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mike Kliman, November 15, 1978. Ex Edward Lee.

Struck late in the year 1836 from a steam press, the 1836 reeded edge issue is the first half dollar to be struck under this motive force (earlier half dollars 1794-1836 were made by horsepower in the literal sense of the word).

A steam press was first used at the Mint at 10:35 a.m. on March 23, 1836, at which time small commemorative medals began to be struck. The Philadelphia Mint was operating with relatively crude equipment until then. If the Mint had purchased steam-operated presses from Boulton & Watt in England (a source for copper planchets for the Mint), which had become highly refined by the end of the 18th century, no doubt the Capped Bust half dollars would have been highly stereotyped and would lack the fascinating varieties we recognize and enjoy studying.

Encyclopedia of U.S. Coins, by Don Taxay, 1971, and continued in the 1976 version of the same text.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, Madison Estate, January 1979, Lot 835.

1838-1839 CAPPED BUST ISSUES HALF DOL. REVERSE, REEDED EDGE

Martin Van Buren's presidency continued. The Trail of Tears saw the relocation, against their will, of the Cherokee Indian nation from Florida to the west.

Slavery was a hot topic in Congress and the Underground Railroad was organized. During this period Abner Doubleday was credited with the origin of baseball, however, the game is actually much older.

Overseas, thousands died in Northern Ireland due to a famine caused by crop failure.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Robert Maskell Patterson continued his term as director. The branch mints began coinage operations in 1838.

Gem 1837



1837 MS-64.

Strike: A few stars and the border dentils are weak, although most other details are razor sharp.

Surfaces: Blazing white lustre with pale blue peripheral toning.

Die State: Light clash mark at the chin.

PCGS Population: 22; 13 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, June 21, 1977.



1837 "Broad Milling." AU-58.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Mottled pale rose and light blue with a trace of violet. Two imperfect areas are noted in the edge reeding.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: 31.4-31.6mm and 206.5 grains. In his *Encyclopedia*, Walter Breen mentioned that four different collars were in use by the Mint for these coins. These were enumerated as 29.5mm., 30.5mm., 30.8mm., and 31.6mm. He continued, stating that coins from the largest collar (such as this one) are quite rare. The "Broad Milling" label was introduced in the *Scott Catalogue & Ency-*

Gem 1838



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

1838 MS-64.

Strike: Sharply struck.

Surfaces: White satin lustre with pale gold peripheral toning.

Die State: The reverse is cracked from the right side of a dentil, through the D and to the left wing. Another die crack from the left side of the same dentil joins the tops of UNITE.

PCGS Population: 13; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Fred Weinberg, August 22, 1977.

Celebrated 1838-O Rarity

The Atwater Specimen



94 1838-O Proof-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Exceptional as expected.

Surfaces: Attractive deep lilac with pale gold. Obverse and reverse display faintly mirrored surfaces. Two minor field nicks are noted on the obverse, pinpointing the pedigree. A splendid specimen; one of the very finest.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The 1838-O half dollar is one of the rarest, most famous, and most storied American coins. The appearance of an 1838-O in a collection has always been a notable occasion and has served to memorialize the collection and its owner in the pantheon of American numismatics. The Pryor Collection coin is one of the very finest extant.

The New Orleans Mint was established according to the Mint Act of March 3, 1835, along with mints in Charlotte, North Carolina and Dahlonega, Georgia.

After considerable effort, the mint in New Orleans was finally ready for operations early in 1838. Bullion was on deposit, and

dies were received from Philadelphia on or before May 3, 1838. The small coinage press broke after an initial production of just 30 dimes, broke again after another run of approximately 20,000 dimes late in May, and was not used again until 345,000 additional dimes were struck in late July. After this came the temporary closing of the facility due to a Yellow Fever epidemic. Only 35,000 more dimes were coined through the end of the year. Finally, in early 1839, a more regular production schedule was established.

Two pairs of 1838-dated half dollar dies, received in that year, remained in storage throughout this period. Early in 1839 (Walter Breen suggests January, R.W. Julian prefers late March) approximately 20 half dollars were struck using one pair of the 1838 dies.

A specimen sold by Edouard Frossard, part of the Friesner Collection, June 1894, was accompanied by an old piece of paper stating this:

"The enclosed specimen coin of the U.S. branch mint at New Orleans is presented to Pres. Bache by Rufus Tyler the Coiner. It may be proper to state that not more than 20 pieces were struck

with the half-dollar dies of 1838."

Walter Breen has referenced his discovery, in the National Archives in 1951, that "a few" of the half dollars were struck "to test a press." Julian has suggested that Rufus Tyler, coiner, used the 1838-dated dies to test the larger coining press in New Orleans for fear that the 1839-dated half dollar dies, just received, might break. As coinage of 1839-dated halves commenced in early April, his reasoning for the late March coinage date involves the assumption that Tyler's test would have taken place immediately before regular production. Regardless of the specific time of coinage, the 1838 obverse dies were defaced on June 13, 1839, strictly limiting the latest date these coins might have been produced.

Interestingly, 10 years prior to selling the aforementioned Friesner coin, Frossard stated that the 1838-O was "struck at Philadelphia as a pattern for the Orleans Mint, which did not begin operations till the following year." This reference, brought to this cataloguer's attention by P. Scott Rubin, was contained in Frossard's catalogue of his own collection sold October 2-3, 1884. (Frossard was fond of devising theories.)

The importance of this coin compares most favorably with the 1894-S dime, the 1876-CC 20-cent piece, the 1827 original quarter, and the 1870-S silver dollar, in that the 1838-O is contemporary to its date and is among America's most famous silver rarities.

Roster of the 1838-O Half Dollar:

The following roster provides a detailed history of the known specimens and is modified and expanded from the list in *Walter Breen's Encyclopedia*, adding information from numismatic researcher P. Scott Rubin, from catalogues of the various auctions cited, as well as information gathered by the cataloguer (Mark Borckardt) from other sources.

1. **Smithsonian specimen.** Superintendent, New Orleans Mint • Mint Director Robert Maskell Patterson • Mint Cabinet Collection • Smithsonian Institution. Breen's Roster Number 1.

2. **Eliasberg specimen.** John H. Clapp • Louis Eliasberg • Eliasberg estate. Breen's roster Number 2.

3. **Cox specimen.** Col. E.H.R. Green • Burdette G. Johnson • Wayte Raymond • J.G. Macallister • Adolphe Menjou • Numismatic Gallery 6/1950:1073 \$1,650 • R.E. Cox • Stack's 4/1962:1873 \$9,500 • Empire Coin Co. • Hazen Hinman • Paramount, "Century Collection" 4/1965:1151 \$8,250 • Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, *Rare Coin Review* #17, Spring 1973, \$75,000 • Ellis Robison • Stack's 2/1982:1605 \$70,000 • Marvin Browder. Brilliant Proof. Breen's Roster Number 3.

4. **Norweb specimen.** J.N.T. Levick • W. Elliot Woodward • R. Coulton Davis • New York Coin Co. 6/1890:655 • James B. Wilson • Thomas Elder 10/1908:346 \$570 • Albert Fairchild Holden • Norweb Family • Bowers and Merena 11/1988:3119 \$93,500 • Southern buyer • Andrew Lustig. Proof 64-65. Breen's Roster Number 4 combines this and the next.

5. **Neil specimen.** Waldo Newcomer • Henry Chapman • Col. E.H.R. Green • Maurice Ryan • B. Max Mehl 6/1945:936 \$1,875 • W.W. Neil • B. Max Mehl 6/1947:580 \$1,600 • James Aloysius Stack • Stack's 3/1975:415 \$50,000 • Steve Ivy, 1982 ANA, 8/1982:2320 \$37,000 • Anthony Terranova • Kevin Lipton • George W. Vogt • Rarcoa, Auction '84:1666, \$55,000 • Florida private collection. Proof. Breen's Roster Number 4 combines this and the previous specimen.

6. **Atwater specimen. The presently offered coin.** Col. E.H.R. Green • William Cutler Atwater • B. Max Mehl 6/1946:555 \$2,200 • Reed Hawn • Stack's 8/1973:122, \$41,000 • Superior, Auction '79:1569, \$62,000 • James Bennett Pryor • Bowers & Merena 1/1996. Proof-63. Breen's Roster Number 5.

7. **Baldenhofer specimen.** Col. E.H.R. Green • W.G. Baldenhofer • Stack's 11/1955:708 \$3,200 • R. Pelletreau • Stack's 3/1959:782 \$4,000 • Jerry Cohen • Lester Merkin • Q. David Bowers • Charles Jay • Stack's 10/1967:181 \$14,000 • Dr.

E. Yale Clarke • Stack's 10/1975:253, \$43,000 • NASCA, Bryan Collection, 11/1977:708, not sold • Julian Leidman • Paramount, Auction '82:1689, \$47,500. Proof-60. Breen's Roster Number 6.

8. **Boyd specimen.** Col. E.H.R. Green • Wayte Raymond • F.C.C. Boyd • Numismatic Gallery, "World's Greatest Collection" (Boyd) 4/1945:410 \$1,600 • Stack's 1971 ANA 8/1971:805 \$13,000 • Dr. George J. Oviedo • Stack's 9/1983:830 \$40,700. EF. Breen's Roster Number 7.

9. **Dupont specimen.** Col. E.H.R. Green • Anderson-Dupont • Stack's 11/1954:2104 \$3,500 • Gottschalk • Federal Coin Exchange, 1957 ANA, 8/1957:1535A \$4,450 • "TAD" Collection • Julian Leidman • Steve Ivy • Manfra, Tordella, and Brookes • Kagin's, 1983 ANA. 8/1983:2494 \$29,700 • Dr. Jasper L. Robertson • Mid-American 5/1985:392, \$35,750 • Kagin's, 1986 ANA, 8/1986:4657A \$33,000 • H.W. Blevins • Superior 6/1988:3567 \$44,000 • Bowers and Merena, 3/1989:2000 \$35,200 • Vintage Auctions, 8/1989:202. Impaired. Breen's Roster Number 8.

10. **Empire specimen.** New Orleans private collection • Ferguson Haines • S.H. & H. Chapman, 10/1888:483 • Col. E.H.R. Green • Charles A. Cass • Stack's "Empire Collection" 11/1957:1344 \$4,000 • New Netherlands Coin Company • Jerry Cohen • Kreisberg-Schulman 4/1967:1065 \$9,250 • Kreisberg Mail Bid Sale 6/29/1970:1044. EF. Breen's Roster Number 9.

11. **Guggenheimer specimen.** Fred S. Guggenheimer • Stack's 10/1953:830 \$3,400. EF. Stated in the catalog to be the F.C.C. Boyd specimen, but the illustration does not match. Breen's Roster Number 10.

Several auction appearances are of coins whose pedigrees are unknown. These include W. Elliot Woodward, 10/1867:1782, Mickley Collection • Edward Cogan, 10/1878:159, Clemens Collection • Ed. Frossard, 10/1884:400, Frossard Collection • Ed. Frossard, 6/1894, Friesner Collection, sold to A.G. Heaton • S.H. & H. Chapman, 2/1903:1149, property of George J. Bauer. The Chapman brothers' description is remarkably similar to the offering of the Empire specimen as part of the Haines Collection, sold by them 15 years earlier • Thomas Elder, 5/1923:2209, B.P. Wright, *et al.* collections. The 1838-O and an example of 1839-O were from a New Jersey family whose father brought the coins from New Orleans • Numismatic Gallery, 8/1953:905 \$3,500, ANA Convention sale • Palm Beach Rare Coin Auctions, 11/1986:318, \$25,000. There have certainly been several, perhaps numerous, private transactions involving the various specimens listed above. With the exception of current era numismatists sharing their recollections of such transactions, most of this information will be unavailable in the future.

Which of the various specimens may be the finest existing is not known with certainty. The Norweb specimen is most likely the finest of those which have recently been offered for sale, although the Cox specimen may compare favorably. How the Smithsonian and Eliasberg specimens compare is not known. Stack's has described the Neil and Atwater specimens as being equal in condition with each of these being, perhaps, Proof-63. In his *Encyclopedia*, Walter Breen described the Baldenhofer specimen as being impaired. The remaining known examples are all lightly circulated or impaired.

B. Max Mehl in 1946 stated that the presently offered Pryor Collection coin, then in the Atwater Collection, was of such quality that no finer specimen exists or could exist. Today, the verification of such a claim awaits the concurrent inspection of the top pieces.

PCGS Population: One certified by PCGS, grading EF-45.

Pedigree: Col. E.H.R. Green • William Cutler Atwater • B. Max Mehl 6/1946 \$2,200 • Reed Hawn • Stack's 8/1973:122, \$41,000 • Superior, Auction 79:1569, \$62,000 • James Bennett Pryor • Bowers & Merena 1/1996 • Your name here.

Delightful Gem 1839 Reeded Edge



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 95 1839 Large Letters reverse. MS-64.
Strike: Sharply detailed.
Surfaces: Mottled golden amber and pale blue toning.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: The normal reverse for this coinage issue. (One reverse die exists with Small Letters as used on the initial Liberty Seated issues. This extremely rare transitional variety is not represented in the current offering.)
PGCS Population (general information): 5; 2 finer, both MS-65.
Pedigree: Ex Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, December 1977, Lot 5738.



- 96 1839-O MS-62.
Strike: Blunt strike on top curls and cap. All remaining details are sharp.
Surfaces: Mellow golden violet and blue-green. Minor hairlines are visible under the toning.
Die State: Both dies are shattered with extensive peripheral and internal die cracks as illustrated.

Narrative: The first standard half dollar coinage from the New Orleans Mint after the presses were tested (using the 1838-date dies). 178,976 examples of the 1839-O were struck. Today they are quite difficult to locate in full Mint State preservation.

PGCS Population: 3; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Scott Coins, July 12, 1979.

Among all United States half dollars struck by steam and later methods from 1838 onward, the 1839-O is renowned for having more die breaks than any other date or mintmark. Indeed, an 1839-O from perfect dies would be a major rarity.

1839-1853 LIBERTY SEATED, NO MOTTO ISSUES

After Martin Van Buren finished his term as president, William Henry Harrison took office. He caught cold on his inaugural day and died a month later, thus earning the doubtful distinction of being the president who served the shortest time in office. Following Harrison in the White House were John Tyler, James Polk, and Zachary Taylor.

The driving social concern of the era was the abolition of slavery, with opinions strongly divided. Hard times after the Panic of 1837 continued, although recovery was under way. New Orleans became the largest shipping port in the country.

The 1840s were witness to such events as the first telegraph transmission from Washington to Baltimore, the founding of Wells, Fargo & Co. (and later American Express), and the settlement of the Mormons at Salt Lake City. The Mexican War broke out in 1846 and was officially over in February 1848, barely a month after gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River in California (at the time a Mexican territory). Had the signers of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo known this, they might have had different thoughts.

The formerly slow westward expansion was quickly spurred by the Gold Rush and the Forty-niners. Ships remained derelict in the harbor of San Francisco as their crews deserted for the gold fields. In 1850 California was admitted to the Union. Also that year Southern demand was voiced for a more stringent Fugitive Slave Law to combat the Underground Railroad. In 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published, later prompting Abraham Lincoln's statement "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war."

Coinage:

At the Mint, this was truly the era of Christian Gobrecht, and his designs adorned all of our coinage from the half cent through the eagle. Even James B. Longacre's later double eagle and gold dollar (1849) were certainly influenced by Gobrecht's Liberty Head. Robert Maskell Patterson continued as director, being replaced by George N. Eckert in 1851.

The Mint Cabinet, founded in 1838, grew in size and importance as mint officials bought pieces on the market, kept examples that were received in the course of bullion deposits, and made exchanges with collectors.

Choice 1839 No Drapery

Only Year of Issue



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

97 **1839 No Drapery. Breen-4744. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6-.**

Strike: Stars 4 and 5 display the only weakness.

Surfaces: Faint amber with pale blue peripheral toning. A few scattered marks are present.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: This is the only true "No Drapery" design type from Christian Gobrecht's original motif as used on his illustrious silver dollar of 1836. All later issues without drapery at Liberty's elbow were inadvertently created as the result of polished or lapped dies or, alternatively, from insufficient depth of impression of the master die into the working die.

In his *Encyclopedia* Walter Breen indicates that possibly five true Uncirculated 1839 No Drapery half dollars survive along with three Proofs. We feel that his Mint State estimate may be slightly low and would not be surprised to learn of as many as 12 to 15 Uncirculated coins, most of which are of a quality below that of the present example. Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert rate this as Rarity-6- in MS-60 or better, indicating 25 to 30 examples may be known. Undoubtedly, many pieces listed as Mint State in the literature actually fall short of the mark. Still others represent resubmissions to grading services or otherwise duplicated listings.

Over the years this coin has been eagerly sought for its importance as the first year of issue and for its No Drapery feature.

PCGS Population: 4; 2 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Abner Kreisberg Corp. (Jerry Cohen), January 28, 1974.

Gem 1839 Drapery



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

98 **1839 Drapery. B-4745. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-5+.**

Strike: Most of the stars are weak. On the reverse the left talon shows slight weakness of detail.

Surfaces: Lustrous light silver with rose and blue peripheral toning. The reverse is slightly darker than the obverse. A few tiny nicks are visible, with the most prominent being a small mark to the right of the eagle's head.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Aside from the addition of drapery at Liberty's elbow, the large rock left of the shield was substantially reduced in size. We have not heard of an 1839 With Drapery issue that had the drapery polished off the die (thus creating an "1839 No Drapery") although we suspect it is a possibility. In such an instance the size of the rock would be the determining attribution point.

PCGS Population: 4; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Mid-American, February 1985, Lot 481.



99 **1840 Small Letters. B-4749. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-6+.**

Strike: Absolutely full.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with pale golden rose, lilac, and blue.

Die State: Two faint clash marks are visible on the obverse with the reverse die perfect.

Narrative: Minor doubling is visible on all four date digits.

PCGS Population: 6; 7 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, April 11, 1974.

Classic 1840 Medium Letters

Erstwhile "Large Letters"

Struck in New Orleans(?)



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 100 1840 Medium Letters. B-4747. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Fully struck.

Surfaces: Pale ivory with some scattered marks, although none are serious.

Die State: A faint clash mark is visible in the field right of the drapery. The reverse die is extensively cracked, apparently as always with this variety. A thin crack starts at the rim at 6:00 and extends through the F, arrows, and into the eagle's tail feathers, up to the shield. Another crack from the rim at 2:00 through the M, extends to the right wing. A third crack from the rim at 4:00 passes through the final A, to the wing and shield. Additional cracks are present.

Narrative: A classic rarity, a transitional issue with the reverse of 1838-1839 Capped Bust coinage. Listed in the Wiley-Bugert reference and in the current *Guide Book of U.S. Coins* as **an issue of the New Orleans Mint without a mintmark**. The reverse die was left-over from the early Capped Bust coinage which had the mintmark on the obverse. While this is certainly interesting, in our opinion confirmation awaits the discovery of an 1839-O Capped Bust half dollar with the reverse displaying the same die cracks.

This variety was called the Large Letters issue years ago.

PCGS Population: 2; 1 finer, MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 552.

Possibly Finest 1840-O

Small O Mintmark



- 101 1840-O Small O. B-4752. MS-63 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Slight loss of detail at the tip of the foot and the end of the rock. The reverse is full.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with subdued white and splashes of darker toning. A few marks are present, although none are serious.

Die State: The obverse die is perfect. The reverse has a die crack from the rim at 6:00, through the L of HALF, extending to the middle claw of the left talon.

Narrative: The noted weakness may be a striking characteristic but, may also represent a lapped die. This is very possibly the finest known of this variety.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., February 13, 1974.



- 102 1841 B-4754. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.

Strike: 100%.

Surfaces: Pale gold obverse with the reverse lighter. The devices have a cameo appearance with reflective fields.

Die State: Minor clash marks are visible on the obverse and reverse. Criss-cross die lines between the border and Liberty's toe may represent an area where the die was not perfectly polished before being placed in the coinage press.

Narrative: A superb specimen of an issue that when seen (which is not often) is typically in much lower grades.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 475.

Increase Your Chances

Increase your chances of bidding success. Do you have a certain amount in mind? By means of our "Maximum Expenditure" option—refer to the Terms of Sale, No. 15—you can bid on coins up to eight times the amount you want to spend, and we will bid on your behalf until that limit is reached. This will vastly increase your chances of success. It's just like being at the sale in person!

Notable 1841-O

103 1841-O B-4756. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.
Strike: Full and bold.

Surfaces: Highly lustrous. Mottled brownish gray with vivid blue on the obverse and lighter blue on the reverse.

Die State: Perfect obverse with a faint reverse crack from the rim at 1:00, diagonally through the F in OF, and into the field. Other faint cracks are partially obscured by the toning.

Narrative: Exceedingly rare in this high grade. New Orleans coins of this era were not saved by numismatists, and not even the Mint Cabinet (founded in 1838) acquired mintmarks on a regular basis.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries June 1987, Lot 1456.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Famous 1842 Small Date

Superb Gem—Plain 4 in Date

104 1842 Small Date. B-4759. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-8.

Strike: Obverse has slight weakness along the upper drapery line. The reverse has weakness visible on the left talon and upper arrow feather.

Surfaces: Multi-hued obverse with bluish green, amber, rose, and lilac. The reverse is pale golden gray.

Die State: Obverse cracked from the base of the date into the right and left fields. A crack connects stars 1 through 7, Liberty's head, and star 8. The reverse has a massive rim break over TAT. A thin crack connects the bases of HALF DOL, while another joins the tops of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Narrative: Beginning with this issue the reverse was modified with large letters in the legend. Quite scarce in Mint State with fewer than 20 known of all varieties. A famous rarity.

See note under 1842 Medium Date (Lot 106) concerning Plain 4 and Crosslet 4.

PCGS Population: Finest is MS-63.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Leidman, May 5, 1973.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Gem 1842 Medium Date

Crosslet 4 in Date

105 1842 Medium Date. B-4760. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-5+.

Strike: The only weakness is on the upper arrow feather.

Surfaces: Pale ivory and gold satin lustre.

Die State: The obverse has a crack from the rim at 5:00 through the base of the date, the left end of the rock, and to the border at 8:00. The reverse is extensively cracked: Through the base of HALF DOL; from the lowest arrow head to the rim; and through the tops of most legend letters with several extensions to the rim. Another crack from the rim to the left arm of the first T in STATES joins the top of the left wing.

Narrative: To quickly differentiate between the Small and Medium Date varieties, just look at the 4. The Small Date has a plain straight crossbar to the 4. The Medium Date has a crosslet (vertical serif) at the right end of the crossbar.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, August 1973, Lot 136.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Memorable 1842-O

Classic Small Date Rarity
Nearly Mint State; Finest Certified



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 106 1842-O Small Date. B-4758. AU-58 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Light golden brown. A few scattered marks are mentioned for accuracy, these consistent with the grade. Slight friction is visible on Liberty's right leg and breast.

Die State: A faint obverse crack from the rim at 7:00 extends to the shield. A weak crack from the inner point of star 11 passes star 12 and disappears in the field. On the reverse a thin crack from the rim at 6:30 extends between AL of HALF to the eagle's middle talon on the left claw.

Narrative: One of the two known reverse dies was also used on coins dated 1841 but in an earlier die state than the 1841 issue. Therefore this issue was struck *before* the 1841-O issue. One of the two varieties must have been struck in the wrong year.

Although technically not Uncirculated, this lovely coin has the aesthetic appeal, and therefore possibly the value, of a piece grading perhaps MS-62 or MS-63. The distinction is moot, as at AU-55 it is far and away the finest certified by PCGS. When offered by us in the Terrell Collection sale, we suggested that the prospective purchaser "bid on this coin with the reasonable expectation that it will be the finest you will ever have a chance to purchase." James Bennett Pryor took this advice, and indeed, he never had a chance to purchase a finer specimen. Based on his experience, we feel that the advice is even more important today, for it may be another 24 years, or longer, before the current purchaser offers this coin again.

PCGS Population: Before the passing of this coin through the portals of the PCGS facilities the finest was AU-50. As a point of reference, the best certified by NGC grades Very Fine.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 479.

Gem 1842-O Medium Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 107 1842-O Medium Date. B-4764. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7.

Strike: All obverse and reverse details are bold.

Surfaces: The obverse has medium gold toning with light peripheral bluish lilac. Lighter gold on the reverse. Full satiny lustre on both sides.

Die State: A thin crack from the rim over star 11 connects stars 12 and 13. Very minor cracks join the tops of a few letters in the legend.

Narrative: Another memorable early branch mint half dollar from an era in which very few coins were saved at the time of their issue.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex NASCA December 1981, Lot 2909.



- 108 1843 B-4765. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Sharp, although a few details of Liberty's hair as well as the eagle's left talon are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Silvery lilac changing to vivid teal and pale gold at the borders. A few minor hairlines are noted in the right obverse field.

Die State: Extensively cracked with a prominent die crack from the rim below 4, through 8 and 1, into the rock, and disappearing in the field beside star 2. Another crack from the rim at 1:00 to Liberty's head and into the field below star 7. An additional crack,

very faint, from the rim at 5:00 horizontally into the rock above the 8. Extensive thin rim crumbling on the obverse from 6:00 to 8:00. The reverse also has several cracks. Notably from the rim over D through the bases of STATES OF. A branch of this crack curves down through the eagle's beak to the top of the left wing. Another crack from the M passes through the top of the right wing to the eagle's neck. A few other faint cracks are also noted.

Narrative: One of the finest known specimens of an issue usually seen in well worn grades.

PCGS Population: 2; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Lyn Knight, August 16, 1976.

Incredible 1843-O Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

109 1843-O B-4767. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.

Strike: All stars are sharp except star 8. Slight weakness is visible above the eagle's left talon.

Surfaces: Brilliant lustre beneath pale golden toning.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: In the late 1950s, when Grover C. Criswell and his brother Clarence were partners in the rare coin and Confederate currency business, Q. David Bowers met with them one evening at a coin show. Displayed before him were several 1843-O Liberty Seated half dollars, not a rare date (2,268,000 were minted), but one not often seen, then or now, in high grades such as Mint State.

Upon inquiring, Bowers was told that a few months earlier a beachcomber in the St. Petersburg, Florida area had stumbled upon a small metal container in the sand, and in it were between a dozen and 20 of these 1843-O halves, all Mint State and all of the same general appearance—indicating that they had been kept together for a long period of time.

Where these have gone in the intervening years is not known, but, presumably, they are widely scattered. It is not known how they would grade under today's numerical system (MS-60, 61, 62, etc.)

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 25, 1973.

Lovely 1844 Issue

From the Norweb Collection



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

110 1844 B-4771. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Sharp with all design details bold.

Surfaces: A frosty coin with mottled light iridescent gold, rose, and lilac toning.

Die State: Thin die cracks connect several stars on the obverse and several letters on the reverse.

Narrative: A superb coin of the quality typically seen only when old-time collections come on the market.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, Norweb Collection, Part III, November 1988, Lot 3136.



111 1844 B-4771. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Stars 5 through 7 are slightly flat. Most other design details are boldly rendered.

Surfaces: Prooflike iridescent surfaces with blended pale gold, amber, and blue.

Die State: Minor cracks only.

Narrative: Faint traces of repunching are visible at the date, although not clear enough to describe as a repunched date variety.

PCGS Population: 11; 2 finer, both MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Liedman, 1973

1844-O Doubled Date



- 112 1844-O Doubled Date. B-4775. AU-50. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-6.

Sharpness Grade: AU-55.

Strike: Minor localized weakness, although most details are very sharp for the grade.

Surfaces: Pleasing lilac and gold with minor obverse residue.

Die State: Minor reverse cracks.

Narrative: A spectacular die blunder which ranks as one of the most egregious of an era in which there were many mistakes made at the Mint. (Walter Breen, for one, was fond of attributing such gaffes to James B. Longacre, who had much experience in engraving flat illustration plates but relatively little in diecutting.)

On the 1844-O Doubled Date, the date, consisting of a four-digit punch, was first placed in the die approximately 60% too high and was repunched in its normal position.

PCGS Population: 0; 2 finer, finest MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Gem 1844-O Normal Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 113 1844-O B-4773. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Creamy white lustre with a touch of gold along the obverse rim from 7:00 to 8:00.

Die State: Two faint sets of clash marks are visible.

Narrative: Similar to WB-105 with recutting very faintly visible on the crossbars of both 4's.

In the 1840s there were only a few dozen serious numismatists in the United States, and many, if not most, did not collect half dollars. So far as is known, not a single numismatist of the era acquired branch mint coins on a regular basis. Whether a coin had an O mintmark or not was generally ignored, as collections were built by date sequence only. It was not until nearly a half century later that William Sumner Appleton, Augustus G. Heaton, and others began to take serious note of mintmarks. By that time nearly all Mint State Liberty Seated half dollars from branch mint had long since disappeared.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-63.

Pedigree: Purchased from Dr. Joseph G. Nouhan, July 25, 1979.

Rare Quality 1845



- 114 1845 B-4776. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Generally sharp but with very minor weakness on the top of Liberty's head, the eagle's left talon, and the upper arrow feather.

Surfaces: Subdued satiny lustre beneath pale silvery gray toning.

Die State: The obverse is perfect. The reverse has a heavy crack through the tops of ED STA to the rim over TE. Another crack connects the tops of OF AMER to the rim over I.

Narrative: An elusive issue in Mint State condition and one which is not immediately recognized by most as a scarce date. One reason is that until the advent of certification (1986), grading was much more casual than it is today. It seems likely that the vast majority of Liberty Seated half dollars dated in the 1840s and listed in catalogues of years ago as Mint State would not measure up to Mint State today.

PCGS Population: Finest is MS-63.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries February 1988, Lot 1801.



- 115 1845 B-4776. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Most design details sharply defined.

Surfaces: Bright satin lustre with just a faint trace of pale amber. A few minor surface marks do not detract from the wonderful appearance of this specimen.

Die State: A minor clash mark is present in the right obverse field. The reverse is identical to the previous lot.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Ed Milas, August 18, 1975.



116 1845-O B-4777. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Star 8 is slightly weak.

Surfaces: Frosty lustre with splashes of gold on the obverse, lighter on the reverse. A few minor abrasions, but none of a serious nature.

Die State: Only very minor cracks on obverse and reverse.

Narrative: The 1845-O is one of many Liberty Seated half dollars which are plentiful enough in worn grades, but which emerge as world-class rarities if in choice Mint State. Often the location of a coin such as this requires years of effort, even though the market price may not be high.

PCGS Population: 4; 3 finer, all MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 567; from an unspecified Kagin sale, Lot 1188.

Gem No Drapery 1845-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

117 1845-O No Drapery. B-4778. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath pale gold and blue iridescent toning.

Die State: Most details of the drapery at Liberty's elbow have been polished off the die. A faint clash mark is noted in the right obverse field. With minor die cracks only. A series of diagonal die file marks are present over AME.

Narrative: With the exception of the 1839 No Drapery design type in which the drapery from Liberty's elbow was not part of the

die, all "No Drapery" and "Partial Drapery" Liberty Seated half dollars are late die states of varieties that originally were made with drapery. As coinage dies were used they became damaged through die cracks, clash marks, and other influences. Periodically, Mint workmen would take the dies out of service and polish, or lap, them to remove evidence of the damage. Effectively this process would minutely reduce the surface of the die, removing the defects during this process. The die polishing would also reduce the depth of design detail, with the lowest relief areas being partially or entirely removed. The areas most affected by this process included the drapery at Liberty's elbow on the obverse and the eagle's tail feathers on the reverse. The No Drapery or Partial Drapery die states are known for many different coinage issues, with several offered in the listings to follow.

PCGS Population: Finest is MS-62.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 487.

118 1845-O Triple Date. B-4782. EF-45. Wiley-Bugert: 106. Rarity-6.

Strike: Most design details are sharp except where subdued by wear.

Surfaces: Pale golden brown with iridescent blue and amber peripheral toning. A small area of planchet roughness is noted from left of the date up to star 1. A few minor marks are consistent with the grade.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Very scarce as a variety with less than 200 currently identified in all grades.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, December 1975, Lot 511.



119 1845-O Repunched Date. B-4783. MS-61. Wiley-Bugert: 108. Rarity-7+.

Strike: All details are sharp.

Surfaces: Prooflike, with pale amber, vivid gold, and light blue.

Die State: Minor cracks. Stars 1 and 2 have been weakened from lapping of the die, although the drapery is still prominent.

Narrative: Perhaps the numismatic publications should get together and standardize nomenclature in the hobby. For example, should it be *repunched*, *recut*, or *re-engraved* when a date is punched twice in a die? Should it be a *doubled die* (or date) or a *double die* (or date)? Is it Liberty Seated or Seated Liberty, etc., etc.?

Pedigree: Purchased from Miracle Mile Coin Center, March 15, 1988.

120 1845-O Repunched Date. B-4783. F-12. Wiley-Bugert: 108. Rarity-3+.

Surfaces: Natural gold and gray. A few marks, although none of any consequence.

Die State: Minor cracks.

Narrative: One of many repunched dates of this era. At the time all features on the obverse and reverse dies were in the master die, except for the date and mintmark. Thus, these are the only *positional* differences available for study.

Pedigree: Purchased from Tom's Coins, March 20, 1981.

Gem 1846



- 121 1846 Medium Date. B-4786. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.
Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Frosty lustre with faint traces of gold toning just starting to develop.

Die State: A series of die cracks circle the obverse and a minor rim break is present below the date. Weak clash marks are noted in the right and left obverse fields. The reverse also displays extensive thin die cracks with clash marks below the eagle's left wing.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 569.

1846 Over Horizontal 6

A Wondrous Coin!



- 122 1846 Over Horizontal 6. B-4788. MS-62 (PCGS) or finer. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Slightly prooflike deep amber with pale blue peripheral toning. The reverse is lighter appearing than the obverse.

Die State: Several faint cracks are noted on both obverse and reverse.

Narrative: This is one of the most memorable varieties in the entire Liberty Seated half dollar series and is a notable rarity as well. The presently offered Mint State coin is truly remarkable, truly exciting, truly wondrous, and will be a cynosure in the cabinet of its next owner. While PCGS has called it MS-62, and at that level it is unsurpassed in the annals of that service, we believe it to be a bit better, MS-63. You can take your choice.

The Mint employee preparing this die first placed the digits "184" in the die, most likely with a three digit date punch containing these numerals. Next he picked up the punch for the final digit and placed the "6" in the die sideways! After his error was discovered, the digit was repunched in the die in the proper upright alignment.

Today we must thank the unspecified Mint workman for creating a most wonderful variety to pique our collecting interest.

PCGS Population: None finer than MS-62 certified.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1978, Lot 359; previously from Stack's sale of the Reed Hawn Collection, August 1973, Lot 156.

Superb 1846 Tall Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 123 1846 Tall Date. B-4789. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 107. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Incredibly sharp with all details bold.

Surfaces: A superb coin with very light natural ivory toning.

Die State: A thin crack is noted through the base of the date.

Narrative: This variety is described by Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert as having a tripled 1 and 4 in the date. Horizontal die lines under the olive leaves on the reverse are easily seen on this gem specimen.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer. The PCGS population report does not specify Medium Date vs. Tall Date.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 489.

Remarkable 1846-O

Medium Date



124 1846-O Medium Repunched Date. B-4794. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-8-.

Strike: Fully struck, as are virtually all of the coins James Bennett Pryor selected for his cabinet.

Surfaces: Fully prooflike beneath iridescent blue and pale lilac. A few scattered marks are present, although not of much concern to the cataloguer, nor presumably, to the buyer, in view of the overall quality of the coin. Simply delightful.

Die State: Minor die cracks connect several of the stars. The reverse has several heavy die cracks through the legends and olive leaves.

Narrative: As described by Wiley and Bugert, the 1 and 8 are slightly repunched below. We also note very slight doubling inside the upper curve of the 6.

PCGS Population: 0; 1 finer, MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 572; previously ex Stack's, December 1958, Lot 316.

Mint State 1846-O Tall Date



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

125 1846-O Tall Date. B-4797. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 106. Rarity-8-.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satiny white with scattered marks. A touch of deep amber toning is noted below Liberty's foot, at the right end of the rock.

Die State: Early. No clash marks or cracks are noted, except for one extremely faint crack through stars on the left to Liberty's head.

Narrative: The 1846-O Tall Date is a classic rarity of long standing, and even an Extremely Fine coin would be memorable. However, the Pryor Collection piece is far beyond that.

In their book, *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars*, Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert state that only one (certified in 1993) Mint State example of this variety is known. This and the following lot provide the specialist with two additional Mint State examples of this rarity.

PCGS Population: Finest is MS-62. Second finest is EF-45.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 573.

Duplicate Mint State Example



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

126 1846-O Tall Date. B-4797. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 106. Rarity-8-.

Strike: Slightly weak at the center of the reverse.

Surfaces: Slightly prooflike satin lustre beneath pale golden brown toning.

Die State: The obverse crack of the previous lot is slightly more advanced. A few faint reverse cracks are present.

Narrative: Several different size digits were employed throughout the 1840s. In very general terms the Medium Date varieties are similar to early issues of the 1840s while the Tall Date variety is more like the later issues of the decade.

PCGS Population: Finest is MS-62. Second finest is EF-45.

Pedigree: Purchased from Floyd Farley, July 11, 1989. Earlier from J.V. McDermott to Ray Pohler.



- 127 1847 B-4798. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.
Strike: Very slightly weak on the left talon.
Surfaces: Reflective surfaces with various shades of iridescent gold, russet, and pale blue.
Die State: Perfect obverse and reverse.
Narrative: A rarity in Mint State, the 1847 is readily available in circulated grades.
PCGS Population: 4; 3 finer, finest MS-65.
Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, June 1987, Lot 1467.*



- 128 1847 B-4798. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.
Strike: Fully defined with very slight weakness on the hair curls, although all head details are visible.
Surfaces: Very lightly cleaned. Golden rose with lilac and blue peripheral toning.
Die State: Obverse is perfect. The reverse has a faint crack through the tops of STATES OF.
Narrative: Rare so fine.

Unbelievable 1847/6 Overdate

Legendary Gem!

- 129 1847/6 B-4802. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-8-.
Strike: Bold.
Surfaces: Pale gold peripheral toning with prooflike obverse fields. Minor field marks are consistent with the grade.
Die State: The underdate is bold. A die crack connects the bases of 1847, extending left and right into the field. LIBERTY and the vertical shield stripes are minutely doubled. Clash marks are not visible on the obverse. The reverse die was extensively cracked.
Narrative: This 1847/6 is so rare that only a few of the "name" collections offered in the past have included a specimen in *any* grade. By any standard, this has to be one of the rarest, most desirable issues in the entire Liberty Seated series.
 Probably only three or four examples exist in or near Mint State condition, along with one described as a Proof. It is probable that the latter is a business strike (although we haven't seen it, this comment is equivocal).
PCGS Population: Finest graded by PCGS is Very Fine.
Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 574; from New Netherlands.*



Prooflike 1847-O



- 130 1847-O B-4803. MS-63, prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.
Strike: Generally sharp, although a few stars are weak.
Surfaces: Reflective surfaces with satiny lustre. Pale violet, amber, and faint blue. A few minor marks along with faint hairlines, evidence of an old cleaning.
Die State: Minor cracks and clash marks, those on the reverse more prominent.
PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-64.
Pedigree: *Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.*

Bowers and Merena Tradition

We've been supplying choice, rare, and desirable coins to collectors, museums, dealers, and others ever since Dave Bowers began his dealership back in 1953. Along the way we have handled our share—and more—of the world's great collections and rarities. Thousands of properties have come our way, and we've helped tens of thousands, probably hundreds of thousands, of collectors enrich their holdings. If you are a past Bowers and Merena client, we look forward to having you participate in this sale as well. If you are new to us, welcome, and use this auction as an ideal way to get started.

Landmark 1847-O

131 1847-O Repunched 7. B-4803. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 105. Rarity-8.

Strike: Stars 12 and 13 are slightly weak. The reverse shows slight weakness on the left talon and the olive branch.

Surfaces: Satin lustre. Faint gold blended with light blue.

Die State: Very faint cracks connect a few stars. Prominent reverse die cracks join most legend letters.

Narrative: A remarkable quality New Orleans Mint half dollar of landmark quality from an era in which very few Mint State coins were saved at the time of issue. Once this coin crosses the auction block it is probable that double the price offered would not bring forth another.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

1847-O Doubled Date

Feature Article Subject



132 1847-O Double Date. B-4805. MS-63 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-8.

Strike: Stars 7 through 13 are slightly weak. The reverse is weak on the left talon.

Surfaces: Reflective satiny lustre with nicely blended gold, amber, and light blue. Superb surfaces.

Die State: The obverse is perfect. On the reverse several die cracks have formed retained cuds (rim breaks which have not yet fallen from the die) over TED and STA. An additional minor crack is noted through the tops of TES OF.

Narrative: Wiley and Bugert's rarity rating of "8" indicates that they believe this variety is unique in Mint State condition. In his *Encyclopedia* Walter Breen states that this variety was discovered by John H. Clapp, whose collecting career spanned the early 20th century. This variety was reported by James Bennett Pryor in his article "An Unreported 1847-O Half," *Gobrecht Journal*, Issue No. 24, July 1982, pp. 19-21. His article is reprinted below (with permission).

Earlier graded from MS-65 up to MS-67 (see reprinted article be-

low), so you can take your pick.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Pullen and Hanks, April 1981, Lot 369. Previously from the Hope Ranch Collection, formed in California between 1863 and 1908, with the original envelope from this collection.

An Unreported 1847-O Half

As far as I can determine, the 1847-O half with recut date has not been previously reported. Below is an enlargement of the date area of this variety. The bottom of the '1' that was first cut into the die, can be seen on each side of the real '1' at about 30% up from the bottom and tilting slightly to the right. It would seem, this being the case, that the top of the original '1' was cut slightly into the base of Liberty, although this cannot now be seen. As to the '8', it can be seen originally cut about 25% up from the present '8' and all outside lines, both left and right, can be seen, as well as the lines inside the present bottom "loop" of the '8.' The top of the first cut '8' just misses the bottom of the base of Liberty. The '4' area is also very interesting, as remains of the first '4' can be seen in five or six different areas. The top of the first '4' is complete, about one third of the way from the top of the present '4' to the base of Liberty. Other remains show on the bottom outside of the triangle of the present '4', inside the triangle at the bottom right, below the triangle and above the base on the left, to the right of the triangle on the tip of the crossbar top and slightly to the right between the base and crossbar. As to the final digit in the date, or '7', only one minute first cutting can now be seen and this is on the left vertical end at top right. The final, present cut date is slightly above center from base to bottom denticles.

Originally, I believe the date was cut with the top of the '1' into the very bottom of the base and then on an angle downward for the '847.' One final note on the recutting: there appears to be an original cutting of something from the field into the base immediately above the present left side of the '8', although this may not show in the photograph.

As a date, the 1847-O is not too difficult to locate in grades below EF, and slightly scarce in EF and AU. In TRUE uncleaned Uncirculated it is rare, with certainly no more than a dozen left. The presently described coin is in original MS-65 condition, fully struck on both sides, perfectly centered, toned in lavender, gold, and yellow and is slightly prooflike. It is my belief that it is UNIQUE in this condition. This coin, unattributed as a recut date and, evidently unnoticed, came out of the Pullen & Hanks 1981 Texas Numismatic Association Sale, May 1 and 2, Dallas, Texas. Many of these coins, including the 1847-O half, came out of the Hope Ranch Collection in California formed between 1863 and 1908, and they had the original envelopes stored with the coins in bank vaults since 1908. I personally bid and purchased this coin as Lot 369, graded GEM Unc. 67.

Evidently, Beistle never saw this coin as it is unlisted in his 1929 work. All seven obverse dies mentioned by Beistle have the toe NOT enclosed, and on the presently described 1847-O, the foot is completely supported and the toe completely enclosed. This strong original recut date is not mentioned in the *Guide Book* nor in Don Taxay's 1971 work or in any reference work I can find. I have, since May 1981, examined many, many 1847-O halves and have not found this die again, though there must be more out there somewhere.

The obverse of my coin has no die breaks, but the die break features on the reverse make it quite interesting in itself. A HEAVY die break begins from outside rim, through denticles and then to top of the right side of I in UNITED; across top of T and E and from right top of E back through denticles and to outside of the rim above right side of D. In about another 2mm, this strong break comes from outside rim through denticles and to top left of S through top of T and just missing top left of A and back through denticles and to outside rim above middle of T. These breaks are so strong that the denticles DO NOT LINE UP where the break comes through. Certainly the die must have broken soon after this coin was struck. Another die break starts from the heavy break above first A down to top of TES OF; another runs along tops of AME.

High-Grade 1848



- 133 1848 B-4806. MS-63 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Generally strong with slight weakness in the rocky base below Liberty.

Surfaces: Attractive light gold toning with frosty lustre.

Die State: Very minor cracks only.

Narrative: With the discovery of gold in California and very large quantities being mined, the world silver price rose in relation to gold. This in effect caused the silver in our coinage to be worth more than face value and yielded a profit to brokers who melted the silver into ingots for sale overseas. The result of this process was the disappearance of large numbers of silver coins through 1852, creating today's rarities.

PCGS Population: 3; 4 finer, all MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Leidman, May 5, 1973.

Marvelous Gem 1848-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 134 1848-O B-4812. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-8.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: The obverse is gold and green with a trace of rose. The reverse is primarily deep rose with pale gray.

Die State: Three small rim breaks at 4:00 on the obverse. A faint die crack joins the tops of some letters on the reverse.

Narrative: A marvelous specimen of yet another New Orleans

Mint coin produced in an era in which numismatists ignore mintmarks.

The base of the 1 is repunched.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex NERCA March 1976, Lot 770.

Quality 1849



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 135 1849 B-4815. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.

Strike: Very minor weakness, although all details are generally quite bold.

Surfaces: Attractive pale gold and iridescent blue-green.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: This example shows very slight doubling below the primary date digits. This characteristic is described by Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert as "bounce die doubling."

PCGS Population: 8; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Bill Nagle, July 21, 1988. Ex Heritage, 1988 ANA, Lot 740.



- 136 1849-O B-4818. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Most stars are weak as are the details of Liberty's hair.

Surfaces: Reflective silver gray surfaces with splashes of lilac and blue. A few minor hairlines are noted from an old cleaning.

Die State: A die crack joins the rim and head, left of star 8. The reverse die is perfect.

Narrative: Silver coins of this date and mint are well known for their elusive character, particularly in high grades. The half dollar is the most available of the several issues and is found readily in worn grades, but it is very rare in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 1; 3 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Mid-American February 1985, Lot 492.

37 1849-O B-4818. AU-58. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-2-.

Strike: Stars 7, 8, and the Liberty cap are all slightly weak.

Surfaces: The obverse ranges from light silver to steel blue while the reverse is lighter brownish gray. A small scratch is present in the lower right obverse field.

Die State: A faint crack from the rim left of star 8 joins the back of the head. A series of reverse rim breaks from 8:00 to 10:00 are present, although these are very thin. On the reverse a thin crack from the upper beak disappears in the field above the left wing. Another from the rim at 1:00 through the F joins the top of the right wing.

Narrative: High grade for the issue.

PCGS Population: 2; 6 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Unavailable.

Seldom Seen 1850



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

138 1850 B-4820. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: All details are bold.

Surfaces: Beautifully toned with lovely reflective light gray and iridescent rose surfaces.

Die State: Very faint cracks are present among the legend letters.

Narrative: As is true of silver dollars of this date, Liberty Seated half dollars are often very sharply struck and have somewhat prooflike surfaces. The 1850 is seldom seen in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 499.



139 1850-O B-4822. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: All details are sharp except for the eagle's left talon, a standard location of weakness among all Liberty Seated half dollars.

Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath deep grayish brown toning.

Die State: Very faint clash marks and cracks.

Narrative: Slight doubling is noted on the date digits and other obverse details, the result of "machine doubling," in which the obverse die shifts slightly, or bounces, during the striking process. Very rare in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 4; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 25, 1973.

Elusive Mint State 1851



140 1851 B-4824. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.

Strike: All design details are absolutely full.

Surfaces: Frosty mint lustre is hiding beneath silvery gold and slate toning on the obverse. The reverse is toned to a smooth gray-brown with splashes of iridescent blue.

Die State: Only very minor cracks.

Narrative: Very elusive in all grades, extremely so in full Mint State. Yet another James Bennett Pryor coin which may require years of searching to find another if this one is not obtained.

PCGS Population: 2; 2 finer, both MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, June 1987, Lot 1473.

Remarkable 1851-O



141 1851-O B-4827. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.

Strike: Extremely sharp.

Surfaces: Light silver central toning gradually changing to pale gold and iridescent blue. The reverse is primarily brilliant.

Die State: Perfect dies except for very faint obverse and reverse clash marks.

Narrative: A remarkable coin in Mint State. Where can you find

another? Remember the general philosophy that no matter how high you "reach" to acquire this beauty, the price you pay will then become the market price upon which future transactions will be based. And, you will have the coin while your competitors are still searching.

PCGS Population: 4; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales November 1976, Lot 890.

1852 Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

142 1852 B-4829. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Very slight weakness on stars 6 through 8.

Surfaces: Brilliant with frosty lustre and pale gold toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: By the early 1850s the price of silver on international markets had risen to the point at which contemporary American silver coins from the half dime to the dollar were worth more in melt-down or intrinsic value than face value. Accordingly, freshly-minted pieces did not circulate effectively and tended to go into the hands of bullion brokers or were used in the export trade. This situation is responsible for the sharply reduced mintages of the early 1850s (until the With Arrows coinage began after the Act of February 21, 1853).

The 1852, with a mintage of only 77,130, is one of the rarest Liberty Seated half dollars of its era. In Mint State it is *incredibly* rare.

PCGS Population: 0; 2 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 1254.

Unheard Of Gem 1852-O

Finest Certified



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

143 1852-O B-4833. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Extremely sharp with full star and hair details. The reverse is also fully detailed.

Surfaces: Satiny lustre with blue-green and gold toning. One tiny obverse rim nick is noted at 10:00.

Die State: Minor obverse clash marks are noted right of the drape. Reverse clash marks are visible in the vertical shield stripes.

Narrative: A scarce date which is an extreme rarity in Mint State. Probably not more than five or six exist of which this may be *by far* the finest. A landmark coin that combines great rarity and beauty.

PCGS Population: 0; finest hitherto graded is MS-63. Now the record book will need to be revised!

Pedigree: Purchased from Mike Kliman, August 27, 1979. Ex Jim Halperin.

1853 LIBERTY SEATED, NO MOTTO ARROWS AT DATE, RAYS ON REVERSE

New Hampshire Democrat Franklin Pierce was the country's leader, elected in 1852. Pierce has been described as a "Pro-Southern Northerner" who included Jefferson Davis in his cabinet as secretary of war.

The Gadsden Purchase was acquired from Mexico in 1853 for the sum of \$10 million. The result of this land acquisition was an excellent route for railroads from Texas to California.

Overseas, Commodore Matthew Perry negotiated trade with Japan, demanding the treaty as a right, not a favor. (While doing this he did not forget his hobby, numismatics, and he

ved specimens of interesting coins as he found them.)
Congress provided funds to construct a telegraph line from
the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, and the Sault Ste.
Marie canal opened, connecting lakes Huron and Superior.

Coinage:

At the Mint, George N. Eckert ended his term as director,
Thomas M. Pettit served from April to June 1853, at which time
James Ross Snowden began his memorable eight-year term.
The Mint Act of 1853 solved the problem of non-circulating
coinage by reducing the authorized weight of silver denomina-
tions from the half dime to the half dollar.

Lovely 1853 Arrows and Rays



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 144 1853 Arrows and Rays. B-4835. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3.
Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Pale amber gray satin lustre.

Die State: Two sets of obverse clash marks with one set on the reverse. A crack joins most stars.

Narrative: By early 1853 half dollars and other American silver coins were rare in circulation, as most had been acquired by bullion brokers and speculators, and many had been melted. Circulating silver coinage primarily consisted of Spanish-American silver, usually well worn, and of the 1/2, 1, and 2 real denominations.

The Act of February 21, 1853, reduced the authorized weight of silver coins from the half dime to the half dollar (but not the silver three-cent piece or the silver dollar). To signify the new standard, arrows were placed at the date of the half dime, dime, quarter, and half dollar, and resplendent rays were added to the reverse of the two largest denominations. As the newly-minted silver coins were no longer worth more than their face value, they began to circulate effectively. Once again, mintage figures increased dramatically. From early 1853 until 1862 (see note under 1862 in subse-

quent listing), Liberty Seated silver coins of these denominations became familiar sights in commerce.

PCGS Population: 27; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Continental Coin Galleries, March 8, 1975.

Splendid 1853-O

Arrows and Rays



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 145 1853-O Arrows and Rays, Double Date. B-4843. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Stars 7 and 8 are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Light russet with deeper golden rose peripheral toning. On the reverse, lilac and blue are part of the equation.

Die State: Only very minor cracks. The obverse has many horizontal, vertical, and diagonal raised die lines.

Narrative: The varieties of doubling often seen on these issues may be the result of "halos" around the various devices, letters, stars, and date digits. The halo effect was described by Wiley and Bugert who explained their theory that working dies were very heavily punched with all details for use as temporary master dies. Under this scenario various details were punched with such force that the surrounding part of the actual punch created a slight impression around the device. (While we do not necessarily subscribe to this theory, not having studied it, we mention it as being of possible interest in the present connection.)

PCGS Population: 6; 9 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, August 1973, Lot 180.

1854-1855 LIBERTY SEATED, NO MOTTO ARROWS AT DATE, NO RAYS ON REVERSE

President Franklin Pierce was firmly seated in office, apparently not doing much else. In 1854 Henry David Thoreau's classic *Walden* was published, and in the next year, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* was printed.

Horace Smith and Daniel Baird Wesson founded a company which would eventually become one of the world's leading producers of handguns.

Overseas, the Crimean War began as Britain and France declared war against Russia.

Coinage:

At the Mint, James Ross Snowden continued his term as director. The San Francisco Mint began coinage of gold in 1854 and silver in 1855.



- 146 1854 Arrows. B-4845. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.
Strike: Full except for slight weakness on the left talon.
Surfaces: Brilliant with lovely ivory lustre.
Die State: Several minor obverse and reverse cracks. Both dies display extensive clash marks.
Narrative: Popular as a "type" coin to illustrate the With Arrows style, but *without* rays.
PCGS Population: 10; 9 finer, finest MS-66.
Pedigree: Purchased from Don Devore, February 28, 1975.

Gem 1854-O Arrows



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 147 1854-O Arrows. B-4850. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3+.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant satiny lustre.
Die State: Extensively and heavily cracked in the right obverse field and among stars 8 through 13. The reverse is boldly cracked through the left upright of M to the top of the right wing and beyond, toward the junction of the wing and neck where this crack branches.
Narrative: Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert, in *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars*, note that coins such as this, which are heavily cracked, are uncommon. (See our related note about die cracks under 1839-O.)
PCGS Population: 6; 4 finer, finest MS-67.
Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1979, Lot 1926.

Attractive 1855 Arrows

- 148 1855 Arrows. B-4855. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.
Strike: Bold except star 13 is flat.
Surfaces: Lovely deep gold with blue and amber peripheral toning.
Die State: A faint crack joins stars 6 and 7. Both obverse and reverse have a single faint clash mark.
PCGS Population: 2; none finer.
Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1975, Lot 467.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Superb 1855/4 Overdate

None Finer Certified



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

149 1855/4 Arrows. Overdate. B-4858. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7-.

Strike: Stars 4 through 7 are slightly weak, otherwise all details are sharp.

Surfaces: Satiny white with slightly prooflike characteristics on the obverse. A lint mark on the obverse, as struck, crosses the neck and left shoulder.

Die State: A single clash mark is visible in the right obverse field. On the reverse, a prominent die scratch connects the bottoms of D and S, joining the upright of the first T in STATES, just above the base.

Narrative: More properly described as 1855/854 as remnants of a previous 8 and 5 are visible. assuming 4-digit date logotypes were in use, careful examination may yield very faint traces of a previous "1" beneath the existing "1."

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Steve Ivy, 1980 ANA, Lot 2263.

Superb 1855-O Arrows



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

150 1855-O Arrows. B-4859. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Very slight weakness at upper obverse and lower reverse.

Surfaces: Amber and violet over vivid lustre. The obverse has a diagonal lighter and darker toning pattern.

Die State: A raised die dot is visible on the top surface of the upright of 1, along its right edge just above the lower edge of the serif. The reverse has a prominent crack from the rim at 8:00 through the tops of UNITE and back to the rim. A branch of this crack, also from the rim at 8:00, extends down through the leaves and the bases of HALF DOL. Other faint cracks are noted through various legend letters.

PCGS Population: 11; 2 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Robert Emmer, March 14, 1975.

Superlative 1855-S Rarity

Incredible Gem



151 1855-S Arrows. B-4864. MS-66 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-8.

Strike: Full hair detail and partial star detail. The vertical shield lines on the reverse are sharp except for very slight weakness at the very bottoms of stripe 3, as usually seen.

Surfaces: Satin lustre is subdued by olive-gray toning. Faint rose highlights are noted on the reverse.

Die State: Obverse die polished with no trace of drapery.

Narrative: The 1855-S is a rarity in any and all grades, and even one worn smooth would be worthy of special mention in a catalogue. In grades such as VF and EF it is a notable rarity, and in Mint State it is a *formidable* rarity. MS-66? Hitherto unheard of!

It is probably correct to state that whether you ever have a gem 1855-S in your collection will be determined by your success or lack thereof with the present coin. It is further probably correct to say that the morning after the sale no amount of money would secure a duplicate unless the winner of this lot wishes to sell.

Not only is this one of the most important coins from the James Bennett Pryor Collection sale, it is also one of the greatest and

most desirable rarities to be sold in our generation.

The no drapery feature is interesting, but its significance in the marketplace is far eclipsed by the importance of this as a date and mintmark in a grade virtually unknown.

A bit of mint history: Although the San Francisco Mint began operations in 1854 using the former facilities of Curtis, Perry & Ward (who struck Moffat and other private gold coins), half dollars were not made there until a year later, 1855. This heralded a run of Liberty Seated half dollar issues that extended for many years. Today, all of those dated in the 1850s are very rare if in Mint State, and the 1855-S is exceedingly rare. In contrast to usual practice, a special striking of the 1855-S was sent to Philadelphia and incorporated in the Mint Cabinet. Two additional Proofs are reported in private hands..

PCGS Population: Prior to this submission, no Mint State examples graded (no, not even an MS-60).

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 23, 1973. Ex Lester Merkin.

1856-1866 LIBERTY SEATED, NO MOTTO ISSUES

James Buchanan was elected the country's leader. Slavery continued to be the most important public issue with temperance the runner-up. Buchanan's term would witness the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision which was a major victory for slave owners. Two years later, this court upheld the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

Financial panic was also a concern as the year 1857 ended with almost 5,000 business failures.

Abraham Lincoln was elected the nation's new president in 1860 and, this same year, South Carolina prepared for secession from the Union. The eve of the Civil War was upon us.

Early the next year the Confederate States of America was formed with Jefferson Davis elected as its president. An attack on Fort Sumter, April 12, 1861, marked the beginning of a five-year struggle between the blue and the gray. Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 and finally, April 9, 1865,

the war was over. Lincoln was assassinated just five days later while attending the play, *Our American Cousin*, in Ford's Theatre.

Coinage:

The year 1857 saw great changes as the half cent and "large" cent were replaced by the small copper-nickel Flying Eagle cent. Spanish-American silver coins, more common than Liberty Seated coinage in circulation, had their legal tender status revoked; this would be finalized in 1860. Proof sets were first sold in quantity to collectors in 1858, in which year perhaps 210 or so reached buyers (estimates range from 80 sets to 300 or so).

At the Mint, James Ross Snowden concluded his term as director early in 1861, passing control to James Pollock. This would be the first of two separate terms for Pollock. The southern mints fell to the Confederacy which, for a short time, continued to produce coinage from federal dies in New Orleans and Dahlonega (but not in Charlotte).

The Garrett Gem Proof 1856

None Finer Certified

152 1856 B-4866. Proof-64 (PCGS). Rarity-6 as Proof.

Strike: Bold as expected.

Surfaces: Lovely mottled blue, deep amber, and violet toning over deeply mirrored fields.

Die State: Perfect dies. Short diagonal die scratches up to the left from the dentils below the 1.

Narrative: Certainly not more than two dozen examples of this Proof rarity are known, and the number of survivors may be closer to 15 coins. This is the second variety of 1856 Proof half dollars discovered and described by Walter Breen in the 1989 revision of his *Encyclopedia of United States and Colonial Proof Coins*. A prominent attribution point for this variety is the hollow area at the top of the left vertical stripe in the reverse shield.

Proof sets were not sold in large numbers to numismatists until two years later in 1858. In 1856 distribution was small and mainly to favored insiders and dignitaries.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Garrett Collection, Part I, November 1979, Lot 344; from B. Max Mehl, March 13, 1920.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)



153 1856-O B-4867. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.

Strike: Stars 7 and 8 along with the top of Liberty's head are weak. The lower left portion of the eagle is weak.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with delightful iridescent lilac, blue, gold, and rose toning.

Die State: A minor crack from the rim at 8:30 passes through star 1 to Liberty's arm.

Narrative: While New Orleans Mint half dollars of the 1840s are great rarities in Mint State, by the 1850s the survival rate was a bit better, and while gems such as the present 1856-O are certainly rare by any standard, at least one does not have to wait years to buy a specimen. Among extant Mint State coins of this decade, the Pryor pieces have been selected with great care.

PCGS Population: 10; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased at the Central States Numismatic Society convention, Kansas City, April 25, 1975.



- 154 1856-S B-4870. AU-58. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Moderate golden brown with pale blue peripheral toning. A few minor hairlines and abrasions do not affect the lovely appearance of this scarce issue.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: The Rarity-4+ rating assigned to this variety by Wiley and Bugert is for coins grading EF or AU. Mint State coins are listed as Rarity-8-. We would estimate that only 10 to 15 coins exist in AU or higher grades.

PCGS Population: 1; 6 finer, finest MS-62.

Pedigree: Purchased from Robert Johnson, August 15, 1974.

1857 Proof Rarity



- 155 1857 B-4872. Proof-63. Rarity-6 as Proof.

Strike: All details are full as expected.

Surfaces: Pale gold and lilac with faint blue peripheral toning. Lovely mirrored fields. A thin scratch is noted on the reverse from the final A to the eagle.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Most likely fewer than 25 are known. Marginally more are said to be known than the previously offered 1856 in Proof state according to conventional wisdom, but in actuality we believe the 1857 eclipses the 1856 slightly.

PCGS Population: 8; 5 finer, all Proof-64. (Of course, some of these may represent resubmissions.)

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales October 1979, Lot 494.

- 156 1857 Blundered Date. B-4872. MS-60. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Several stars, the top of the head, and the cap are all slightly weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant white with splashes of gold around the edges.

Die State: At least two sets of clash marks are visible on the obverse and reverse.

Narrative: Remnants of the base of an extra 5 and 7 are visible in the rock above those date elements.

PCGS Population: 1; 34 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 719.

Attractive 1857-O Rarity

A Sleeper



- 157 1857-O B-4874. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: Fully struck.

Surfaces: Frosty lustre with very faint gold toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A message to the collector who doesn't believe Mint State examples of this issue are rare: only 29 issues out of 122 Liberty Seated half dollars have lower PCGS Mint State populations. These 29 issues include the Carson City mint coins along with all of the classic rarities in the Seated series. Wiley and Bugert rate Mint State 1857-O half dollars (of all varieties combined) as Rarity-7-, indicating only 10 to 12 exist.

PCGS Population: 3; 3 finer, finest MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from Dr. Joseph J. Nouhan, July 25, 1979. Ex Julian Leidman.

Classic Gem 1857-S

Possibly the Finest



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 158 1857-S Medium S. B-4877. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Complete.

Surfaces: Strong satin lustre. Predominantly brilliant with subdued golden violet toning. A few minor marks are visible on the left shoulder.

Die State: Perfect dies. No cracks or clash marks are visible.

Narrative: Very possibly the finest known for this date/mintmark issue. In fact, this is the only coin listed by Breen in his *Encyclopedia* for this date. Generally Breen listed the finest known to him among his listings for scarce and rare issues.

The importance of the 1857-S in this grade cannot be overemphasized. Here is another Pryor Collection coin that will be forever remembered in the annals of the series.

PCGS Population: 0; finest graded is MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 606; from Stack's, Wolfson Collection, May 1963, Lot 1170.



159 1858 B-4878. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.

Strike: A few stars are weak, otherwise all details are sharp.

Surfaces: Deep gold with iridescent blue satin lustre.

Die State: Very minor clash marks only.

Narrative: Rarer than appreciated, and at this Mint State level rarer than Proof. Were it not for Proofs absorbing much of the demand for high-grade specimens of this date, the price would be

multiples of its present level.

PCGS Population: 15; 6 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Robison sale, February 1982, Lot 1661.



160 1858 B-4878. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.

Strike: Stars 12, 13, and the tip of Liberty's foot are all slightly weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant white with satin lustre.

Die State: The obverse has several interesting radial cracks: from star 1 to the rim over star 2; star 2 to the rim over star 3; star 3 to the rim over star 4; star 7 back to the rim over star 6; and from the tip of the Liberty Cap to the rim above. Another jagged crack connects stars 3 through 6 and to the crack between stars 6 and 7. The reverse is cracked from the right upright of N to the rim. Another connects the tops of ATES OF. A third joins the tops of ERICA. A faint clash mark is visible on the reverse.

Narrative: This is a truly delightful coin for the specialist studying die states of Liberty Seated half dollars.

PCGS Population: 12; 21 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Unavailable.

Publicized 1858-O Variety

Pryor Article Subject



161 1858-O B-4882. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-8.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with pale ivory changing to iridescent blue, green, and violet peripheral toning.

Die State: Very minor cracks on the reverse.

Narrative: This variety was reported by James Bennett Pryor in his article "An Unreported 1858-O Half," *Gobrecht Journal*, Issue No. 26, March 1983, pp. 18-19, reprinted below. At the time the owner graded it as MS-63.

PCGS Population: 5; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased at the Central States Numismatic Society convention, Detroit, April 11, 1974.

An Unreported 1858-O Half

In Issue #24 [of the *Gobrecht Journal*] I described the recut date 1847-O half and mentioned a future article on a similar coin. If one were to describe the 1847-O with recut date as "consistent," the 1858-O counterpart could best be described as "inconsistent."

The recut parts of the 1858-O are not quite as strong as on the 1847-O except on the first digit "1." At the left side of the digit and about 40% down from the flag, are strong remains of the flag of the initial "1" that was cut into the die. On top of the denticle directly below the base of "1" is a small triangle of the original base.

The first "8" in the date is perfectly normal with no signs of any other cutting. The "5" was originally too high and evidently was cut into the base of Liberty. About half-way between the "5" and final "8" and on the very bottom of the base one can clearly see the top of the flag of the first "5." The most interesting original cut is on the final "8." Either the final "8" is triple cut or it is a final "8" over a first cut horizontal "8," as in the 1846 over horizontal "6." Because of the similarities of the top and bottom loops of the "8" and all the curves, it is difficult to tell for certain which is the case. At any rate, a previous cut can be seen from the top of the "8" and extending left into the field; another (same, horizontally?) can be seen from the right side of the top loop and extending right downward into the field. This cut is not as clear in the photo because of the toning and because it is not quite as strong as the first one. This final "8" leans to the right and is further away from the "5" than 185 are from each other. Also, in addition, both to the left and right of the base of the present "1" there is possible evidence of more original cutting into the die.

On either side of the date, there are faint raised die lines parallel to the base that do not show on the photo. It is usually difficult to match Seated coins to Beistle numbers and often one can eliminate a certain die easier than matching, but this coin seems to come close to Beistle 5-A. However, all stars are recut (not mentioned in 5-A, but in 4-D which my coin does not match).

Beistle 5-A has the foot weakly supported, but my coin has a strongly supported foot and the toe is enclosed. There is full drapery at the elbow and the coin is fully struck, including each star. The only things of note as to the reverse are a few die-breaks, none of which are as strong as on the reverse of my 1847-O half described in Issue #24.

A die-break occurs in the very bottom of all the letters in HALF DOL; another bisects this break from the denticles through the right side of the first "L" extending only slightly into the field above. Another weak break occurs in the very top of the letters from right side of "U" to left side of "T" in the motto; another from top right of second "S" in STATES, through top of OF and then to denticles above left of first "A" in AMERICA.

There are several full and partial die-lines extending from the bottom two claw-tips to the top of the branch end and one die line midway between the top two leaves on left to the wing.

I purchased this coin from some now-forgotten dealer on 4/11/74 at the Central States Show in Detroit, Michigan. Grade of the coin is MS-63 and it has semi-prooflike surfaces.

As a date, as one might expect with a mintage of some 7,294,000, the 1858-O half is very common in the lower grades and can be found with little trouble in EF or AU. However, in true Unc. I have found this date to be a real sleeper. For some reason this date just does not show up in nice Unc. like it should with its huge mintage. This coin is the nicest overall of this date that I have seen in 10 years of collecting Mint State Seated halves!! This 1858-O has very nice toning, no damage at all, and as stated, fully struck and semi-prooflike.

Spectacular Gem 1858-S

162 1858-S Large S. B-4886. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.

Strike: Absolutely full.

Surfaces: Fully brilliant frosty lustre with exceptionally clean surfaces.

Die State: Virtually perfect dies with only faint cracks joining a few stars on the right.

Narrative: This legendary quality 1858-S will take its place as one of the most highly prized of all Liberty Seated half dollars in the cabinet of its next owner. As is the case with other San Francisco Mint half dollars of this decade, the 1858-S is rare enough in lower grades but is of incredible rarity in Mint State.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries February 1988, Lot 1819.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Another Gem 1858-S

163 1858-S Medium S. B-4887. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-8-.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with mottled russet, amber, and teal.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: If Robert Ripley were alive today and interested in numismatics, surely the appearance of two gem 1858-S half dollars in a single sale would be worthy of illustration in his *Believe It Or Not* column.

Here, again, is a coin the importance of which cannot be overemphasized.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Bob Reithe, August 19, 1975. Ex William Mitkoff.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)



164 1859 Type II Reverse. B-4889. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Stars 8 through 13 become progressively weaker. Otherwise, all design details are sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with pale lilac toning around the borders. A few minor surface abrasions, although none significantly detract.

Die State: Very minor clash marks and cracks.

Narrative: A large hoard of Liberty Seated half dollars is said to have been found in Guatemala circa 1956. The cache was said to

contain large quantities of Philadelphia Mint coins dated from 1859 to 1865 and of San Francisco Mint coins dated between 1860 and 1865. These coins ranged in grade from Very Fine to Mint State, and all were abrasively cleaned. Thus they were no threat to the rarity of Mint State issues already in cabinets.

The coins James Bennett Pryor selected from this period are generally attractive Mint State coins with an original or natural surface preservation. It is doubtful that any of these originated with the alleged Guatemala find.

Note: For possible use in an article or at least a mention in a future *Rare Coin Review*, if any reader has information on the coins said to be from Guatemala, please let us know (the condition and content of the hoard would otherwise indicate that it came from the Orient, and we wonder how Guatemala figured in).

PCGS Population: 3; 4 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 613.

Unsurpassable 1859-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

65 1859-O B-4890. MS-66. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Fully struck without evidence of any weakness.

Surfaces: Satin lustre is warmly toned in blended shades of amber, rose, blue, and silvery gray. Exceptional abrasion-free surfaces.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: You can fill in the narrative on this one; whatever you say will probably fall short of what *could* be said.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales October 1979, Lot 501.



66 1859-O B-4890. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: All details are fully delineated.

Surfaces: Satiny white lustre with slightly reflective obverse fields.

Die State: Partial drapery. The dies appear perfect although noticeable die rust is visible through and above STATES OF AMERICA.

Narrative: The partial drapery feature was caused either by lapping of the obverse die or by insufficiently punching in the master die to the proper depth in the working die.

PCGS Population: 10; 21 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 523.

Incredible 1859-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

167 1859-S Large S. B-4892. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Stars 7 and 8 are slightly weak, otherwise sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant frosty lustre with ivory and faint gold toning.

Die State: Perfect obverse. Several cracks are present at the tops of various legend letters.

Narrative: It is probable that most San Francisco half dollars of this era including the 1859-S were used in the China trade. The merchants of San Francisco petitioned the government to produce a "trade dollar," and in this year some 20,000 1859-S Liberty Seated silver dollars were made for this purpose. However, this did not nearly fill the demand, and those seeking to trade with the Orient had to buy Mexican silver dollars (8-real pieces) from bullion brokers or use smaller denomination United States coins.

When American half dollars and other coins reached China they were usually melted down for their bullion. This partially explains the great rarity of Mint State coins today.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mike Brownlee, April 11, 1974.

Delightful 1859-S

From the Norweb Collection



168 1859-S Medium S. B-4894. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: An aesthetically satisfying coin with beautifully toned surfaces, changing to gold at the center, to grayish lilac, to electric blue at the borders.

Die State: Only a trace of drapery is visible at Liberty's elbow. Very minor cracks are present on the reverse.

Narrative: Déjà vu. In what catalogue other than that of the James Bennett Pryor Collection could one remotely hope to find two Mint State examples of this rarity?

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, both MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, Norweb Collection, Part III, November 1988, Lot 3185; earlier from Stack's, November 1955, Lot 731.



169 1860 B-4896. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-5.

Strike: Fully detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant with frosty lustre.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Far rarer than a comparably graded Proof.

PCGS Population: 9; 12 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 525.



170 1860-O B-4898. MS-60. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Lightly cleaned with impaired lustre. The obverse is slightly reflective with faint splashes of brown and steel toning.

Die State: The obverse is perfect. The reverse has a peripheral die crack which connects the tops of all legend letters with the bottoms of HALF DOL.

Narrative: Several letters of the legend, primarily STATES, show very slight doubling to the right. This appears to be a possible unlisted doubled die, although we await the discovery of a second specimen in order to remove the possibility of its being machine doubled.

PCGS Population: 4; 52 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Unavailable.



171 1860-O B-4898. MS-61. Wiley-Bugert: 105. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Stars 8 through 13 become progressively weaker. RICA shows weakness at the tops, corresponding to the obverse weakness.

Surfaces: Satiny lustre with pale gold on both obverse and reverse.

Die State: A thin crack from the obverse rim at 5:00 extends into the lower drapery folds. Minor reverse cracks are noted through the legend letters.

Narrative: At last, a time-out in this dramatic listing of Liberty Seated halves—a coin, which while very nice, is not among the very best of its kind. However, knowing James Bennett Pryor's penchant for being very "fussy" when buying, we would not want to take bets that many of the coins reported to exist in higher grades are much, if at all, nicer than this one.

PCGS Population: 3; 49 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from B & J Coins, June 30, 1973.

Unbelievable 1860-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

172 1860-S Large S. B-4900. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.

Strike: Full and sharply detailed.

Surfaces: Full mint frost with faint toning splashes on the reverse. A small strip of planchet roughness is noted on the obverse.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Unbelievable (if we hadn't seen this with our own eyes) quality!

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-63.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 619.

1861 Pattern



- 173 1861 Pattern with experimental motto GOD OUR TRUST. Pollock-330, Judd-279. Proof-64 (PCGS). Rarity-7.

Strike: Sharp although stars 7 and 8 are flat.

Surfaces: Cameo Proof surfaces with attractive russet toning.

Die State: A jagged die crack extends from the reverse rim, between TE of STATES, through the eagle's beak, and into the shield.

Narrative: Silver. Reeded Edge. 191.3 grains. Diameter: 1.200 inches. Die alignment: 180°. Normal dies except for the addition of the motto "GOD OUR TRUST" in plain letters above the eagle. Perhaps only seven or eight examples are known of this variety.

One of several mottos considered for coinage use in this era. In the half dollar series IN GOD WE TRUST was finally adopted in 1866.

PCGS Population: PCGS has graded one example Proof-63. NGC has not graded any of this variety.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 9, 1974.



- 174 1861 B-4902. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Mostly sharp design details.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with deep gold peripheral toning on the obverse.

Die State: A faint crack from the rim over star 9 joins stars 10 and 11. Thin die cracks connect most legend letters.

Narrative: A rarity in this grade; far more elusive than a comparable Proof.

PCGS Population: 30; 14 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Western Numismatics, May 5, 1973.



- 175 1861-O B-4904. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4-.

Strike: Fully detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant ivory lustre. Extremely appealing without abrasions.

Die State: Faint cracks through the reverse letters.

Narrative: Certain 1861-O half dollars were made under the auspices of the State of Louisiana or the Confederate States of America (see following lot). The political orientation of the New Orleans Mint when this particular piece was struck is not known.

The New Orleans Mint closed in 1861 and would not reopen until 1879, when silver dollars and gold coins were struck there. However, the facility was never again used to coin Liberty Seated half dollars.

PCGS Population: 20; 13 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Dr. Joseph G. Nouhan, July 25, 1979.

Confederate 1861-O

From Federal Dies



- 176 1861-O Cracked obverse die. B-4906. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Stars 1, 12, and 13 are weak. Otherwise, all details are sharp.

Surfaces: A choice lustrous example having blushes of lovely coppery iridescence over smooth pearl gray surfaces.

Die State: With die crack extending from Miss Liberty's nose to the border; the same die used to coin 1861 Confederate States of America half dollars (with the distinctive CSA reverse).

Narrative: In April 1861, subsequent to the takeover of the New Orleans Mint by Confederate authorities, four pattern strikings

were produced using a federal Liberty Seated obverse die and a newly designed Confederate reverse.

The specific obverse die used on the 1861 CSA half dollars had a fine crack extending from the bridge of Miss Liberty's nose to the rim near the seventh star.

On the half dollar offered here, the same crack is present, and an additional crack extends from the bottom of the rock through Miss Liberty's foot to the 13th star. Hence this piece must have been struck *after* the four 1861 CSA half dollars sometime in late April 1861. The Mint closed on April 30, 1861.

Thus, this *conclusively* is an 1861-O Liberty Seated half dollar struck by the Confederate States of America.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena Galleries, January 1989, Lot 449.

Gem Confederate Restrike



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

177 1861 Confederate Restrike. B-8002. MS-65.

Strike: The reverse is very well detailed. The obverse is flat as normally encountered on this restrike issue.

Surfaces: Deep rose and vivid blue on the obverse. The reverse is brilliant with faint splashes of toning.

Die State: The reverse die shows extensive rust, a result of storage for several years.

Narrative: Among the nicest this cataloguer (Mark Borckardt) has seen.

This is the so-called "Scott Restrike." In 1879, J.W. Scott & Co. advertised for and subsequently purchased from the public 500 genuine 1861-O half dollars of the regular Liberty Seated design. He then planed off their reverses and struck them with the original Confederate States of America reverse die he had purchased from Dr. B.F. Taylor, Chief Coiner for the Confederacy during their occupation of the New Orleans Mint.

A rather colorful and quite revealing account of the distribution of these restrikes appears as an appendix in M.L. Beistle's 1929 work on half dollars and is recommended to present readers (if you do not have access to a copy of Beistle, drop a private note—

separate from your bid sheet—to Mark Borckardt or Dave Bowers and we'll send you a photocopy of the relevant information with our compliments).

Pedigree: Ex Raroca, Auction '80, Lot 1605.

Marvelous Gem 1861-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

178 1861-S Large S. B-4907. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Very bold although stars 6 and 7 are weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with splashes of bright gold around the periphery.

Die State: Light clash marks, primarily on the obverse. No noticeable die cracks.

Narrative: It is quite probable that nearly all 1861-S half dollars were sent to the Orient in the China trade. One can imagine clipper ships carrying gleaming, freshly-minted San Francisco silver westward to trade for tea, silk, and other goods. Chinese merchants did not like gold, and paper money was not even remotely considered. They desired silver, and as a result much of the S-Mint production of the 1850s and 1860s was shipped there.

PCGS Population: 1; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, November 12, 1974.

Impressive 1861-S



- 179 1861-S Medium S. B-4908. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-6+.
Strike: Bold.
Surfaces: Full frosty mint brilliance. A few minor surface abrasions are present.
Die State: Perfect obverse with faint reverse clash marks.
Narrative: See our comment under Lot 168. It is equally applicable here.
PCGS Population: 1; 2 finer, both MS-65.
Pedigree: Purchased from M.B. Simons, May 12, 1978.

Attractive 1862 Pattern

Struck in Copper



- 180 1862 pattern with GOD OUR TRUST. P-354, J-296. Copper. Proof-64 RB (PCGS). Rarity-7.
Strike: Sharp and well detailed.
Surfaces: Mirrored Proof surfaces which are predominantly pale red with turquoise-brown toning. Some roughness is noted along the reverse rim from 1:00 to 3:00.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Copper. Reeded Edge. 169.6 grains. Diameter: 1.201 inches. Die alignment: 180°. Normal dies with the motto "GOD

OUR TRUST" in plain letters above the eagle. Probably just eight, or perhaps nine, specimens are known in copper from these dies.

PCGS Population: Proof-64 RB and Proof-63 BN. NGC reports one Proof-64 BN.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, February 20, 1974.



- 181 1862 B-4909. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Reflective brilliant surfaces with a few of the normal abrasions often associated with these issues.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Beginning this year, the Treasury Department stopped paying out specie (silver and gold coins). By mid-July 1862 there were no United States coins of any type—from Indian cents to gold \$20 pieces—in circulation. The need for small change was filled by a variety of substitutes including postage stamps (made legal tender for commerce on July 17, 1862), postage currency, privately printed tickets and chits, and private tokens.

The outlook for the Civil War was uncertain, and citizens hoarded all of the "hard money" they could find. The Treasury Department kept Liberty Seated half dollars out of circulation in the East and Midwest until the late 1870s. Meanwhile, Liberty Seated half dollars were relegated to storage or were sold at a premium (in terms of greenbacks) for use in overseas trade. At one particularly uncertain time it took \$100 in greenbacks to buy \$38 worth of silver coins on the open market! (Also see note under 1862-S.)

PCGS Population: 6; 13 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex NERCA July 1976, Lot 1107.



- 182 1862-S Large S. B-4910. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.

Strike: Sharply struck.

Surfaces: Full brilliant mint frost. Delightful aesthetic appeal.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: A prominent rarity in this grade, but not quite in the class of the illustrious Mint State San Francisco half dollars offered earlier.

In 1862, when the Treasury Department suspended specie payments in the East and Midwest, on the West Coast it was business as usual. Freshly-minted half dimes, dimes, quarters, and half dollars circulated actively and at par (however, there was no federal paper money in circulation on the West Coast at the time, thus no double-standard arose). Most Liberty Seated half dollars were either used in regional commerce or shipped to the Orient (the shipments across the Pacific to China continued until the silver trade dollar became a reality in 1873).

PCGS Population: 5; 6 finer, all MS-64.

Pedigree: Ex Auction '89, Lot 219.

- 183 1862-S Large S. B-4910. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Subdued lustre under pale silvery gray toning.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Scarce so fine.
PCGS Population: 7; 11 finer, finest MS-64.
Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 532.



- 184 1863 B-4914. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.
Strike: Full and bold.
Surfaces: Reflective satin lustre. Bright ivory is blended with lilac and rose.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Rarer than an equivalent grade Proof.
PCGS Population: 10; 5 finer, finest MS-66.
Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Awesome 1863-S



- 185 1863-S B-4915. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-5+.
Strike: Very sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with faint pearl gray toning.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Small broken mintmark.
 To borrow from popular parlance, this is an awesome rarity at the present grade level. Only a few collections in the history of American numismatics have contained a specimen that has come even close to the quality of this coin.
PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.
Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, March 16, 1974.

Rare Aluminum Striking

1864 Pollock-461



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 186 1864 pattern in aluminum. P-461, J-393. Proof-67 (PCGS). Rarity-8.
Strike: Every detail is fully defined.
Surfaces: Pale gray Proof surfaces.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Aluminum. Reeded Edge. 54.3 grains. Diameter 1.203 inches. Die alignment: 180°. Transitional dies with the normal obverse and the pattern IN GOD WE TRUST reverse.
 We are aware of just three specimens:
 1. Kagin's, January 1975, Lot 948.
 2. King Farouk, Lot 1788.
 3. R.E. Cox, Jr., Lot 2217; the presently offered example.
PCGS Population: This is the only example graded by either PCGS or NGC.
Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 9, 1974. Ex R.E. Cox, Jr. Collection, Stack's, April 1962, Lot 2217. Earlier from Major Lenox R. Lohr.

Gem 1864



- 187 1864 B-4917. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.
Strike: Stars 6 through 8 and the top head details are weak.

Surfaces: Brilliant.

Die State: Minor cracks through some reverse legend letters.

Narrative: Struck in 1864, but held in Treasury vaults until the late 1870s. (Alternatively, this coin could have been sold at a premium in terms of greenbacks and used in foreign exchange. Far rarer than an equivalent grade Proof.

PCGS Population: 4; 7 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 535.

Rarer Than Believed 1864-S



8 1864-S Large S. B-4918. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: Stars 6 through 8 are weak although all other details are bold.

Surfaces: Attractive satin lustre with just a hint of pale gold. Two very minute rim bruises are noted on the reverse at 5:00 along with a very minor scratch in the reverse field below OF. Neither of these defects were considered severe enough for Superior Galleries to mention them in the description of this coin in their 1989 offering.

Die State: Perfect dies. A small die chip is attached to the upper left serif of D in HALF DOL.

Narrative: A very scarce "common date!" Probably not more than 20 Mint State examples of this issue (all varieties) exist. Like many bits of "conventional wisdom," a bit of research yields findings which vary from those generally and popularly accepted.

PCGS Population: 3; 3 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries January 1989, Lot 4493.

and rim breaks. An interesting comparison.

Narrative: Go back 21 spaces to Lot 168 and read the narrative.

PCGS Population: 2; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, May 12, 1973.



190 1865 "No Drapery." B-4923. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Extremely sharp with all details bold.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with pleasing surfaces free of all but the most minor surface marks.

Die State: Minor die cracks connect the stars and reverse letters. Faint clash marks are visible as well. The drapery is mostly gone with just a trace of the outer drapery line.

Narrative: One of the "inadvertent" no-drapery half dollars that occur in the series. Caused by die polishing, not by design intent.

PCGS Population: 7; 9 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 636.

Another Notable 1864-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

89 1864-S Small S. B-4919. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-7.

Strike: Sharp

Surfaces: Olive-brown with pale gold highlights over satin lustre. Remarkably free of abrasions or other distractions.

Die State: Faint clash marks are visible on the reverse. Otherwise the dies are in the perfect state. The Wiley-Bugert plate coin for this variety is in a much later die state with extensive reverse cracks

Remarkable 1865-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

191 1865-S Small S. B-4927. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7.

Strike: Fully struck although the top of the date is slightly weak. Possibly the date elements were not sharply impressed in the die.

Surfaces: Beautiful satin lustre with splashes of gold and steel peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect obverse. Very minor reverse die cracks.

Narrative: If you collect high-grade Liberty Seated half dollars

and want to have a field day with the S-Mint coinage, you might want to mortgage the farm before you come to the sale. To paraphrase Will Rogers, they are not making any more gem Liberty Seated half dollars.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.

Pedigree: *Ex Stack's, December 1975, Lot 558.*

Gem 1866-S No Motto



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

192 1866-S No Motto. B-4929. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: All details are extremely sharp, although the eagle's left talon shows very minor weakness.

Surfaces: Ivory satin lustre with very faint splashes of golden brown. An aesthetically delightful example of this rarity.

Die State: Two very minor obverse and reverse clash marks. The obverse has a very thin rim break at 12:00. A thin reverse die crack connects the tops of ED STA.

Narrative: This is one of the "must have" coins in the present sale, a legendary rarity in Mint State that is in comfortable company with its San Francisco cousins dated in the 1850s and early 1860s.

Beyond whatever accolades this coin deserves for its absolute rarity in gem grade, it is notable as being one of the most famous landmarks in the entire Liberty Seated series.

Mintage figures for 1866 were not broken down, and so far as the cataloguer knows, attributions of San Francisco Mint silver and gold issues into without-motto and with-motto figures are pure guesswork. As a class, the no-motto pieces are rarities, especially so if in Mint State.

The motto IN GOD WE TRUST first appeared on circulating Liberty Seated half dollars this year, following several years of experimentation. Patterns of various denominations were made from 1862 to 1866 with such mottoes as GOD OUR TRUST, GOD AND OUR COUNTRY, and the adopted IN GOD WE TRUST, the last adapted from the line in Francis Scott Key's *Star Spangled Banner*: "And let this be our motto: In God is our trust."

PCGS Population: 0; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: *Purchased from Julian Leidman, June 27, 1979. E. Armand Champa.*

1866-1873 LIBERTY SEATED, WITH MOTTO ISSUES

Reconstruction was the word as Andrew Johnson and later Ulysses S. Grant, were in charge. In 1866 Congress passed Civil Rights Act (over Johnson's veto) to secure 13th Amendment citizenship rights for former slaves. The 1868 impeachment trial of Johnson failed by one vote. Later in the year Grant received the support of bankers and other money lenders and won election to the White House.

With the Civil War over, economic depression began in the United States. Wall Street experienced its first "Black Friday" on September 24, 1869. F.A.O. Schwarz opened his New York business in 1870, a company which would eventually become the world's leading toy shop and which has delighted the younger set ever since. The next year P.T. Barnum opened his circus billed as The Greatest Show on Earth in Brooklyn, grossing \$400,000 in its first season.

Overseas, the British North America Act of March 29, 1867 formed the Dominion of Canada, including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The next day Alaska was ceded to the United States by Russia, who was happy to accept \$7.2 million for "Seward's Folly." Germany's Second Reich began in 1871 with Wilhelm I of Prussia as emperor.

Coinage:

At the Mint, William Millward (1866-1867), Henry Richard Linderman (first term, 1867-1869), and James Pollock (second term, 1869-1873) were directors. This was an extensive period of coinage trials and experimentation with close to 1,000 different pattern coinage issues produced including some by the somewhat sneaky Linderman (who did redeem himself somewhat in historians' eyes by writing a book, *Legal Tender*). Linderman, a numismatist, built his collection the easy way: by making his own rarities.

After Chief Engraver James B. Longacre died on January 1, 1869, many of his pattern designs were continued in use by his successor, William Barber.



193 1866 With Motto. B-4933. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharply detailed.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with golden ivory changing to very pale blue along the borders.

Die State: Minor clash marks with a thin crack through the tops of AMERICA.

Narrative: This variety has an errant 6 in the denticles.

Rarer in Mint State than Proof.

PCGS Population: 4; 13 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 722.



194 1866 With Motto. Doubled Obverse Die. B-4933. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-7+.

Strike: All design details are quite sharp.

Surfaces: Pleasing iridescent rose and blue toning over deep pearl gray surfaces.

Die State: Two sets of clash marks and minor cracks are visible on the obverse while the reverse has minor cracks only.

Narrative: Details of the obverse double die are most notable on the upper right portion of the die. Liberty's profile is distinctly doubled as are some details of her hair. The Liberty cap has a doubled outline to the left, and doubled points are noted on stars 8 and 9. In addition the upper portion of the pole, above Liberty's hand, is actually tripled. The details closely match "head 2" of the WB-104 variety.

PCGS Population: 7; 6 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, June 1989, Lot 2219.

Notable With Motto 1866-S



195 1866-S With Motto. B-4935. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Pale ivory mint frost with faint hairlines visible in the right obverse field.

Die State: Minor cracks. A thin die scratch connects AM.

Narrative: In this grade the 1866-S with IN GOD WE TRUST is a formidable rarity, but often remains in the shadow of its more famous predecessor, the 1866-S without motto.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1975, Lot 513.



196 1867 "Partial drapery." B-4936. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Fully detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with reflective fields. Pale golden brown with splashes of lilac and blue on the obverse. The reverse is lustrous pearl with pale gold along the periphery. A few minor obverse abrasions. The reverse graded separately is fully MS-65.

Die State: Very minor cracks. Just half of the normal drapery lines are visible.

Narrative: Another sans drapery (or at least lacking much of it) issue made inadvertently by resurfacing the dies.

PCGS Population: 3; 7 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 644; from Stack's, March 1958, Lot 1256.

Landmark 1867-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

197 1867-S Small S. B-4938. MS-64 (ANACS Cache). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: Stars 7 and 8 are weak with all other details bold.

Surfaces: Even golden brown which deepens slightly toward the rims.

Die State: Minor clash marks are visible on the obverse only.

Narrative: The superlatives so freely expressed concerning earlier San Francisco Mint rarities in Mint State are equally applicable here.

PCGS Population: PCGS has graded 2; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Sheridan Downey, III, May 1989. Formerly from Floyd Farley.

Another Remarkable 1867-S



198 1867-S Large S. B-4940. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: Sharp. The eagle's tail feathers are slightly weak which may be the result of die lapping.

Surfaces: Pale ivory lustre, subdued from a very light cleaning long ago. A small scratch on the reverse from the rim at 8:00 to the eagle's left wing.

Die State: Moderate clash marks are noted on both obverse and reverse. No die cracks are noted.

Narrative: Another instance of rarities coming in pairs.

The mintmark is from the same punch as the preceding, although placed in the die with a heavier blow, or possibly repunched, thus it appears to be larger in size.

PCGS Population: 2; 2 finer, both MS-64.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, February 2, 1974.



199 1868 B-4941. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6-.

Strike: Superb.

Surfaces: Reflective satin lustre with bright silvery white mixed with golden rose. Lovely aesthetic appeal. This coin has the initial appearance of many called MS-65 or finer yet is slightly downgraded due to the presence of a carefully removed small reverse spot.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Rarer than an equivalent Proof. Very few were saved by numismatists.

PCGS Population: 7; 4 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Gem 1868-S



200 1868-S B-4944. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Stars 7, 8, and 13 are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath pale gold toning.

Die State: Very minor reverse cracks.

Narrative: Another rarity of rarities, gem of gems among San Francisco half dollars of this era.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Columbia Coin Company, November 20, 1973



201 1869 B-4946. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Reflective lustre with pale silver gray changing to faint lilac and blue along the periphery. A few very minor surface marks and hairlines are noted.

Die State: Faint die cracks connect the upper stars along with the reverse lettering to the right.

Narrative: A great rarity at this level.

PCGS Population: 4; 5 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Leidman, March 16, 1974.

Gem 1869-S



202 1869-S B-4947. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6+.

Strike: Stars 3 through 8 along with the top of the head show considerable weakness. On the reverse the motto and ribbon are weak as are the left talon and tail feathers.

Surfaces: Pale gold with minor surface abrasions and faint traces of steel around some devices.

Die State: Partial drapery.

Narrative: As we leave the 1860s with this 1869-S we have seen what may well be the highest quality offering of San Francisco Mint half dollars of this and the preceding decade cross the block.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Leidman, May 5, 1973.

1870 Mint State Rarity



203 1870 Partial Drapery. B-4951. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: All details boldly defined.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with very minor abrasions on the obverse. The reverse is delightfully choice.

Die State: Partial drapery with about half the drapery lines visible. A thin die crack through HALF DOL., the arrowheads, and to CA.

Narrative: Seldom seen so fine; a rarity.

PCGS Population: 2; 3 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 653; from Max Kaplan 7/59.

Mint State 1870-CC Rarity

First Year of Issue—Perhaps Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

204 1870-CC "No Drapery." B-4955. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-8.

Strike: Incredibly sharp right down to the individual lines in Liberty's sandal.

Surfaces: Prooflike russet with iridescent blue and green peripheral toning. Given the full prooflike nature of this coin along with the perfect die state, it is perhaps possible that this was intended as a Proof or Specimen striking to mark the opening of the Carson City Mint. Most likely the finest of only two or three known Mint State examples of this issue.

Die State: Perfect dies with no evidence of clash marks or die cracks. Approximately half of the outer drapery line is visible.

Narrative: This coin is the stuff of which numismatic legends are made. A century from now numismatists yet unborn will marvel at the day in 1996 when this and other Carson City gems crossed the auction block, when mere money could be used to buy virtually priceless coins. Indeed, James Bennett Pryor considered this coin to be the capstone of his Liberty Seated collection.

Whatever you pay for this, you will have a treasure forever.

Historical notes: Following the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859, the Territory of Nevada became a Mecca for fortune seekers. In the 1860s Virginia City, Nevada, was one of the most thriving mining towns on the face of the earth. In the same decade the call came for the erection of a federal mint, and Carson City, located about 15 miles from the Comstock Lode, was selected. In 1870 it opened its doors for coinage, and from then until 1885 it produced silver and gold coins with "CC" mintmarks. Coinage was suspended in the latter year and was not resumed until 1889, after which production continued to 1893.

In the half dollar series Carson City produced issues only from 1870 through 1878 inclusive. The earlier issues in particular are very difficult to find today and in Mint State are exceedingly rare. In general, mintage figures of Carson City coins are lower than those of contemporary San Francisco issues, due in part to the disconcerting revelation that after the new San Francisco Mint opened in 1873, it was cheaper to ship silver to the San Francisco Mint for coinage and ship the finished coins back to Nevada, than it was to have the coins struck in nearby Carson City.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is EF-40.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1984, Lot 725; formerly ex Stack's Reed Hawn Collection sale, August 1973, Lot 248.

Choice 1870-S No Drapery



205 1870-S "No Drapery." B-4953. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Boldly defined.

Surfaces: Faint golden ivory with satin lustre. A few minor surface abrasions and hairlines are present. From our sale of the Terrell Collection where it was stated "another great opportunity for the half dollar specialist or for the lover of fine and beautiful numismatic things."

Die State: No die cracks are present. The drapery at Liberty's elbow is completely absent although, in its place, are three diagonal lines which are clash marks from the reverse shield.

Narrative: Another of the impossible "common dates." Surprisingly, this is only the seventh Mint State example certified by PCGS. Only 25 Liberty Seated issues have lower Mint State populations yet, the price guides insist on listing this at very slightly over common date levels. Indeed, the PCGS Mint State population is only one coin greater than the extremely rare 1878-S issue, a solid five-figure coin in the same grade level! Our Mint State survival

estimate for this issue is in the range of 25 or 30 coins, few if any of which have an aesthetic quality finer than this.

PCGS Population: 1; 2 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 550.



206 1871 B-4957. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: The top hair details and star 8 are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Delightful reflective surfaces are silvery white in the centers and gradually change to amber, to lilac, to blue, and to green towards the borders. An aesthetic treat. Very faint hairlines are present, mostly on the obverse.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Very rare in high Mint State levels such as this. In 1871 most numismatists ordered Proofs from the Mint and completely ignored business strikes.

PCGS Population: 6; 3 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Mid-American February 1985, Lot 503.

- 207 1871 B-4957. MS-61. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.
Strike: Slight weakness is evident on the eagle's left talon.
Surfaces: Mottled rose, lilac, and blue toning may possibly be artificial.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Rare in Mint State.
PCGS Population: 4; 26 finer, finest MS-66.
Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 723.

Marvelous 1871-CC

Possible Presentation Coin



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 208 1871-CC B-4963. MS-63 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-8-.
Strike: Both obverse and reverse are finely detailed.
Surfaces: Pale golden brown with iridescent blue peripheral toning. The obverse is fully prooflike while the reverse has satin lustre without even a hint of reflective surface. This identical coin was described by Stack's as "a one-sided Proof."
Die State: The obverse die is perfect with fully defined drapery detail. The reverse is identified by the presence of very faint clash marks and two die cracks of importance. The first begins at the top of the first A in AMERICA and joins MER at their centers while the second begins at the inner left curve of C through the lower part of the final A to the arrowheads. An extension of this crack can be seen from the period after DOL to the rim below. These two cracks positively identify this die as one leftover from use with 1870 dated obverse dies.
Narrative: Quite possibly this was made as a presentation coin.
 In any enumeration of Liberty Seated half dollars the most formidable stretch of rarities in high grade begins at the Carson City Mint in 1870 and continues through 1874. Each of these coins is a recognized rarity in any grade—even well worn—and in Mint State, well, you might just forget about them.
 The word *opportunity* is appropriate on every page of the James Bennett Pryor Collection catalogue, and among the present

Carson City coins is probably appropriate in just about every paragraph.

In his *Encyclopedia of United States and Colonial Proof Coins*, Walter Breen describes this and another specimen as one-sided Proofs with Proof striking quality. Microscopic doubling is noted on a few star points. We do not warrant this to be a Proof strike as its intent was not recorded at the time of issue. However, we do note the exceptional quality of its detail and surface.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-60.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1978, Lot 379; from Stack's, Reed Hawn Collection sale, August 1973, Lot 252. Described there as a one-sided Proof.

Superb 1871-S



- 209 1871-S Small S. B-4960. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7+.
Strike: All stars, head, and cap are weak. Slight peripheral weakness is noted on the reverse.
Surfaces: Brilliant golden ivory with satiny lustre. A few minor abrasions and hairlines are present.
Die State: Perfect dies except for a faint curved clash mark through the tops of the date.
Narrative: A splendid gem specimen of an issue usually seen far below this in grade and aesthetic quality. A prize.
PCGS Population: 2; 1 finer, MS-65.
Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatics, Ltd., May 25, 1973.



- 210 1871-S Small S. B-4961. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-6+.
Strike: Generally bold.
Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath mottled pearl gray, rose, and blue toning.
Die State: Perfect dies. The reverse lettering is doubled, the result of strike doubling.
Narrative: Another notable 1871-S. Rare!
PCGS Population: 2; 8 finer, finest MS-65.
Pedigree: Provenance unknown.



- 211 1872 B-4964. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.
Strike: Slight weakness is only apparent on the top hair details.
Surfaces: Mostly brilliant lustre with pale golden toning.

Die State: Perfect obverse with minor cracks through a few legend letters.

Narrative: Far rarer in Mint State than with Proof finish.

PCGS Population: 5; 4 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Bob Rossfield, December 27, 1973.

Incredible 1872-CC

Perhaps Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

212 1872-CC B-4968. MS-62. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-8-.

Strike: Sharply detailed except for slight weakness on the hair curls above Liberty's forehead and on her foot. The reverse is boldly detailed.

Surfaces: Predominantly pale gold with splashes of faint blue. A few minor surface abrasions and hairlines are evident.

Die State: The obverse is perfect with full drapery detail. The reverse is from the same die as the previously offered 1871-CC issue with the die cracks slightly more advanced.

Narrative: Again we are confronted with an incredible rarity, a coin that if in EF or AU grade would be worthy of many accolades. This Mint State coin is sufficiently rare that if you miss this opportunity you may never own an equivalent coin, no matter how much you are willing to pay. Again, *opportunity*.

This is the third consecutive production year for the reverse die, having been first used in the initial year of Carson City coinage production.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-60.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 555.

Superb Gem 1872-S

Tall Mintmark



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

213 1872-S Tall S. B-4967. MS-66. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-6+.

Strike: All details are superbly defined.

Surfaces: Sensational brilliant mint frost under warm pearl gray toning blended with golden rose on the obverse and lighter gold on the reverse. The surfaces are immaculate. Of an estimated 15 to 20 Mint State examples of the 1872-S issue, it would be very hard to imagine that any could be nicer, or even as nice, as the presently offered specimen.

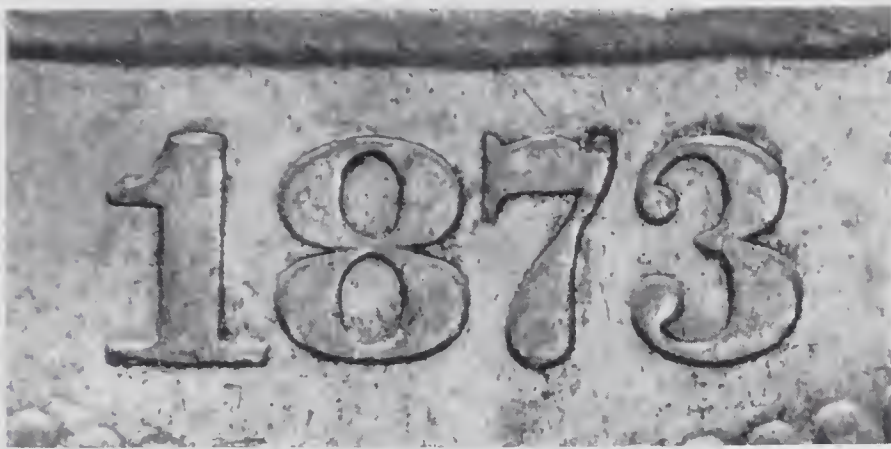
Die State: Perfect obverse with a faint crack through the tops of ED ST on the reverse.

Narrative: Described as a "medium-small" mintmark by Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert. The eagle's tail feathers are mostly absent as a result of die polishing, or lapping, similar in theory to the various "No Drapery" varieties throughout the Seated series.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-63.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, 1975 ANA Convention sale, August 19-23, 1975, Lot 662; earlier ex Overton April 1959, Lot 407.

1873 Open 3 Rarity



- 214 1873 No Arrows, Open 3. B-4971. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-8.

Strike: Generally full although slight weakness is noted among Liberty's top hair curls.

Surfaces: Deep grayish brown with iridescent gold and rose at the borders. Minor surface imperfections are noted primarily in the right obverse field.

Die State: No die cracks or clash marks are visible. Prominent die lumps, characteristic for this variety, are noted on the seated figure.

Narrative: A variety popularized by Harry X Boosel in the course of his extensive research on the coinage of 1873. Value estimates have ranged widely and probably have more fluctuating to do before prices have a semblance of order.

By late 1979 just eight examples were known to members of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club. Today, based in part on rarity levels published by Wiley and Bugert, we estimate 40 specimens exist with perhaps 30 examples in less than Extremely Fine, six or seven coins in EF or AU, and three or four in full Mint State. Additionally, one example has been certified by NGC as a Proof. In the May 1973 offering of this coin, Stack's description stated "Brilliant Uncirculated, deep steel and iridescent toning." No mention of the Open 3 feature was recorded at that time.

Mintage figures are generally estimated as 587,600 Closed 3 and 214,200 Open 3 coins from the Philadelphia Mint before arrows were added beside the date. This is from four Closed 3 obverse dies and one Open 3 obverse. This being the case, the Closed 3 dies each produced an average of 146,900 coins while the Open 3 die produced almost 70,000 more coins than this average. With a total of 801,800 coins of both varieties produced from five total dies, one might speculate that the actual Open 3 mintage was slightly lower, perhaps 160,000 coins. It is believed that many of these were melted upon institution of the new weight standard which took effect April 1, 1873, thus accounting for the rarity of the variety today.

Note: In the present listing of Liberty Seated half dollars the Wiley-Bugert sequence has been followed within a given year, even though this may not reflect the actual order of emission. In the present example, it is generally known that the Closed 3 varieties predated the Open 3 issues in this year.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer. Second finest certified is Very Fine.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, May 1973, Lot 402.



- 215 1873 No Arrows, Closed 3. B-4970. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-7+.

Strike: The only weakness appears on the tip of Liberty's head.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre with only slight peripheral golden brown toning.

Die State: Perfect dies except for an almost imperceptible die crack through the tops of a few legend letters.

Narrative: Far rarer in Mint State than with Proof finish.

The Tripled 3 variety as described by Wiley and Bugert.

PCGS Population: 6; 6 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 724.

1873-CC No Arrows

Attractive Mint State Example



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 216 1873-CC No Arrows. B-4973. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharply struck with slight weakness at the central obverse.

Surfaces: Pale gold satin lustre. The surfaces are quite clean with hardly noticeable contact marks barely worth mentioning.

Die State: The reverse is cracked through AMERICA and the arrowheads. A reverse crack from the inner curve of C through A and the arrowheads is very similar to that seen on the 1871-CC and 1872-CC issues above, although the positioning is not identical.

Narrative: The 1873-CC Without Arrows coinage is of incredible

rarity, with just a single dime and only four quarter dollars registered. The 1873-CC half dollar is more available, but in Mint State it is one of the landmarks of its series.

The writer believes that most, if not all, Mint State 1873-CC No Arrows silver coins of the three denominations were saved from the specimens sent to the Assay Commission in Philadelphia (like as not this also accounts for the supply of known 1876-CC 20-cent pieces).

Based on research by Harry X Boosel, 122,500 No Arrows half dollars were minted at Carson City in 1873 while 214,560 With Arrows coins were struck at the same mint.

PCGS Population: 0; 2 finer, both MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Kagin's, Sale of the 70's, Lot 1077.

1873-1874 LIBERTY SEATED, WITH MOTTO ISSUES

ARROWS AT DATE

Civil War general Ulysses S. Grant was president of the United States, but later historians considered him to be better in the battlefield than in the White House. Wall Street firms had failed and Black Friday, September 19, 1873, marked the start of a 10-day closure of the stock exchange. By year's end 10,000 business failures were recorded and millions of Americans were out of work.

The Greenback Party was organized in the Midwest with proponents claiming the government only need issue greenbacks until enough money would be in circulation to eliminate the depression. (In practice, this has never worked, with the outstanding example being the hyper-inflation in Germany in the early 1920s.)

Overseas, Britain annexed the Fiji Islands and Japan invaded Taiwan.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Henry Richard Linderman replaced James Pollock as director in the spring of 1873. The Coinage Act of 1873 demonetized silver, establishing gold as the nation's prime monetary standard (although the United States did not officially go on the gold standard until years later in 1930). Production of the standard silver dollar was halted and the trade dollar was authorized.



217 1873 Arrows, 3 Stripes in Shield. B-4976. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 108. Rarity-7+.

Strike: A few stars as well as the top of Liberty's head are slightly weak.

Surfaces: Frosty mint brilliance with pale lilac toning. Minor hairlines are noted in the obverse fields.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Ever popular for inclusion in type sets.

PCGS Population: 14; 17 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Julian Leidman, May 5, 1973.

1873 Doubled Obverse Die



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

218 1873 Arrows, 4 Stripes, Doubled Obverse Die. B-4975. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 109. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharp and fully detailed.

Surfaces: Satin lustre beneath a deep mottled blend of dark rose, charcoal, and steel blue. Quite attractive.

Die State: Reverse die cracks exhibit a similar appearance to the previously offered 1873-CC Without Arrows issue.

Narrative: Doubled obverse die identified by Harry X Boosel. The shield lines are doubled as noted. Other doubling is most prominent on the lower folds of Liberty's drapery and on her hand beside the shield. A few stars also are doubled.

In an article in *The Gobrecht Journal*, Issue No. 51, pp. 11-13, Christopher Pilliod shared his view that this is a Class V pivoted hub double die with a pivot point near star 6. In essence, the doubling becomes more prominent with a greater distance from the pivot point. (With a pivot point at star 6 the upper detail would be very minutely doubled and the distant detail will be more sharply doubled.)

PCGS Population: 13; 4 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Heritage, February 1985, Lot 1000.

Gem 1873-CC Arrows

Possibly Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

219 1873-CC Arrows. B-4979. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Slight weakness at the top of Liberty's head and on the eagle's left talon.

Surfaces: Mottled olive, gold, and steel blue.

Die State: Perfect obverse with minor reverse cracks.

Narrative: Another entry in the "rarest of the rare" category, a coin which is a major rarity at *any* Mint State level, never mind a gem such as this. The with arrows feature adds interest and importance.

PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-63.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries February 1988, Lot 1857.

Lovely 1873-S With Arrows

Amazing Gem



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

220 1873-S Arrows, Minute S. B-4978. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Slight weakness at stars 7 and 8 along with very slight peripheral weakness on the reverse from 6:00 to 8:00.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with a touch of amber toning on the reverse. Faint hairlines are visible on the reverse.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: An amazing gem. Quite possibly, no finer coin exists. The arrows feature lends importance and interest, although given the quality and rarity of this gem, this is like gilding the lily.

PCGS Population: 1; the only certified Mint State example. Second finest is AU-55.

Pedigree: Purchased from Kenneth Lee, August 13, 1974.

World's Records

Bowers and Merena has more world record prices than all other auction firms combined. Of the top 10 world's auction prices we hold six! While you may not be a candidate for a \$725,000 Brasher doubloon, it is comforting to know the same Bowers and Merena expertise that extends to world's-record rarities also extends to each and every coin in the present catalogue.



221 1874 B-4981. MS-63 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satin lustre with pale rose toning.

Die State: Minor cracks only.

Narrative: A candidate for a high-grade type set. Large Arrowheads variety.

PCGS Population: 22; 35 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatics, Ltd., August 18, 1973.

Prooflike 1874-CC Rarity

From the Norweb Collection

Possibly Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 222 1874-CC B-4988. MS-63, prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.
Strike: Full save for very slightly weakness on the upper hair curls.
Surfaces: Prooflike, the obverse very deeply so. A superb specimen, perhaps made as a presentation piece. The surfaces are mostly brilliant, overlaid with delicate lilac.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: A superb specimen of a formidable rarity, the final entry in the "impossible" section of Carson City Mint State half dollars (later ones are not as rare, although the 1878-CC mounts a strong challenge).
 Once sold, an offer of twice the price realized probably could not secure a duplicate the morning after the sale.
 Slight doubling is noted on some legend letters. A diagonal die line from the denticles over the left edge of O in OF, extends through the final S of STATES to the lower right base of E.
PCGS Population: 1; none finer.
Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, Norweb Collection, Part III, November 1988, Lot 3224; previously ex Imperial Coin Co. July 27, 1954; earlier from Numismatic Gallery.

Gem 1874-S With Arrows

Possibly Finest Known



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 223 1874-S Small S. B-4985. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.
Strike: Stars 6 through 8 are slightly weak.
Surfaces: Superb satin lustre with delicate lilac and iridescent blue on the obverse. The reverse is primarily pale gold.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: A splendid gem specimen and exceedingly rare as such. Indeed, this single coin in an *ordinary* auction sale would be one of its greatest highlights.
PCGS Population: Finest certified is MS-64.
Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1975, Lot 540.

1875-1891 LIBERTY SEATED, WITH MOTTO ISSUES

In the White House we find Ulysses S. Grant (1869-1877), Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881), James A. Garfield (1881), Chester A. Arthur (1881-1885), Grover Cleveland (1885-1889), and Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893). President Garfield was shot by Charles Guiteau on July 2, 1881, and died September 19. In 1890 Congress passed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to combat business monopolies.

Alexander Bell and Thomas Watson invented the electric telephone by accident in 1875 as they were working on improvements to the telegraph. Bell's telephone was demonstrated at the Centennial Exposition. Western Union refused to buy rights to the telephone for \$100,000 although they hired Thomas A. Edison to make improvements on Bell's design.

A colt named Aristides won the first Kentucky Derby in 1875, James Kellogg introduced a cold cereal in 1877, and Thomas Edison founded his Edison Electric Light Company in 1878. In 1883 the Brooklyn Bridge was opened to connect New York and Brooklyn. Testing the span was P.T. Barnum's show elephant, Jumbo, who crossed without incident. German engineer Karl-Friedrich Benz operated the first gasoline-powered motor vehicle in 1885.

Britain and other European countries had a poor harvest in 1879, the worst of the century, and wheat prices in the United States rose, bringing unexpected prosperity to this country's farmers. In 1888, Jack the Ripper was in the news in London.

Coinage:

At the Mint, Henry Richard Linderman (second term, 1873-1878), Horatio C. Burchard (1879-1885), James P. Kimball (1885-1889), and Edward O. Leech (1889-1893) were directors. The Bland-Allison Act was passed in February 1878, resulting in the Morgan dollar, which was rushed into production the following month.



224 1875 B-4989. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Full and sharp.

Surfaces: An attractive blend of ivory, pale gold, faint lilac, and pale blue. The toning is very delicate over satin lustre.

Die State: A thin crack joins stars 8 through 13.

Narrative: Rarer in Mint State than Proof, but the difference is not generally recognized.

PCGS Population: 11; 10 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex American Auction Association, Terrell Collection, May 18, 1973, Lot 726.



225 1875-CC Small CC. B-4995. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Reflective satin white surfaces with a blending of rose and lilac. Faint hairlines are visible in the obverse fields.

Die State: Minor die cracks only.

Narrative: This variety has the first C of the mintmark repunched over a smaller C.

At last: A "possible" Carson City half dollar in Mint State! For the type collector who desires to acquire a nice Uncirculated Carson

City half dollar we would suggest either this or one of the next two CC issues as the most available half dollar issues from this western Mint. In Mint State preservation we estimate 75 to 100 examples of the 1875-CC in existence, 100 to 125 of the 1876-CC, and as many as 350 coins of the 1877-CC issue.

PCGS Population: 12; 2 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



226 1875-S Blundered Obverse. B-4994. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-3.

Strike: Bold.

Surfaces: Superb golden brown with pale blue-green.

Die State: Minor clash marks and cracks.

Narrative: Very small mintmark. Randy Wiley and Bill Bugert consider the Blundered Obverse to be a very minor variation, not deserving a separate listing.

PCGS Population: 24; 4 finer, all MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries January 1989, Lot 4503 (PCGS graded MS-64); earlier ex 1975 ANA, Lot 677.



227 1876 Type I Reverse. B-4997. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.

Strike: Slight weakness only on the eagle's left talon.

Surfaces: Frosty white mint lustre.

Die State: Minor cracks through most stars and the majority of legend letters.

Narrative: Although the Treasury Department had hoped to resume specie (gold and silver coin) payments early in the 1870s, this was not accomplished until 1876 and later. From 1862 (see earlier note under this year) until 1876, most commercial transactions involving the use of half dimes, dimes, quarters, and half dollars were conducted by the use of Fractional Currency notes. No Liberty Seated half dollars had been seen in circulation since the early days of the Civil War.

In preparation for the resumption of specie payments, mintage quantities of half dollars were increased sharply in the mid-1870s. (But see note under 1879.)

PCGS Population: 24; 3 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, March 16, 1974.

Gem 1876-CC



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 228 1876-CC Type I Reverse. B-5004. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-5.

Strike: Very fully detailed.

Surfaces: Brilliant white mint frost with a faint trace of russet toning. The fields are remarkably clean.

Die State: Faint clash marks are visible on the reverse.

Narrative: A splendid coin; among the very finest known.

PCGS Population: 4; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries January 1989, Lot 4505 (PCGS graded MS-64); Earlier Ex 1975 ANA, Lot 684.



- 229 1876-S "Micro S." B-5000. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre. The obverse is silvery white at the center changing to gold, lilac, and iridescent blue at the border. The reverse is deep russet at the center changing to vivid blue, green, and pale lilac toward the edges.

Die State: A delicate crack joins stars 8 through 13.

Narrative: Quite rare in this high grade. Few equivalent specimens exist.

PCGS Population: 4; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries June 1987, Lot 1538.

- 230 1876-S B-4999. MS-60. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-4.

Strike: Weakness is visible on the base of the rock and on the center of the motto.

Surfaces: Satin lustre is impaired from a light cleaning. Very faint amber toning.

Die State: A thin crack from the obverse rim joins the left end of the rock below Liberty. The reverse die is perfect.

Narrative: This variety has the mintmark slightly double punched.

PCGS Population: 2; 76 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Unavailable.



- 231 1877 Repunched 7, Type II Reverse. B-5008. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 104. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Prooflike with faint green and iridescent blue toning.

Die State: Perfect dies.

Narrative: Splendid in appearance.

PCGS Population: 11; 7 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, March 1981, Lot 1017.



- 232 1877-CC Type II Reverse. B-5020. MS-65 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Superbly detailed.

Surfaces: Frosty mint brilliance with light golden toning.

Die State: Minor cracks through most stars and the base of the date as well as through the tops of most legend letters.

Narrative: A beautiful gem.

PCGS Population: 12; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Greg Holloway, August 22, 1975.



- 233 1877-S Type I Reverse. "Micro S." B-5012. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-6.

Strike: Very sharply detailed.

Surfaces: Intensely frosty with splashes of delicate gold toning.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Another beautiful Liberty Seated half dollar.

PCGS Population: 9; 4 finer, all MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, March 26, 1974.



234 1877-S Triple S. B-5010. MS-64. Wiley-Bugert: 103. Rarity-7+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Very deeply reflective mirrored surfaces with brilliant centers and splashes of iridescent gold, rose, and blue at the peripheries. Incredibly attractive.

Die State: No trace of drapery. Not cracked or clashed.

Narrative: Beautiful.

One impression of the triple mintmark is entirely left of the final position.

PCGS Population: 36; 13 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Kagin's 1977 ANA, Lot 1596; from Stack's R.E. Cox sale, April 1962, Lot 2020.



235 1878 B-5023. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-5.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Frosty white mint brilliance with a trace of light violet around the borders.

Die State: Very minor obverse cracks.

Narrative: Rare and under-appreciated in gem Mint State.

PCGS Population: 4; 8 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Abe Kosoff, May 25, 1976.

Famous 1878-CC Rarity

Splendid Gem



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

236 1878-CC B-5025. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7.

Strike: All features are extremely well detailed.

Surfaces: Frosty white brilliance with a touch of pale lilac around the periphery. A few minor surface abrasions although none are of a serious nature.

Die State: Obverse cracked from star 8 through 13. A faint crack from an olive leaf extends into the field toward U but disappears quickly.

Narrative: A splendid gem specimen of the last Carson City half dollar in the series and in high grades one of the very rarest. A fitting conclusion to the most impressive lineup of Carson City half dollars ever to appear within the covers of a single auction catalogue.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-65.

Pedigree: Ex Kagin's, Sale of the 70's, November 1973, Lot 1084.

Famous 1878-S Rarity

Superb Prooflike Gem



237 1878-S B-5024. MS-64 (PCGS). Prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-7-.

Strike: Razor sharp in all areas.

Surfaces: Prooflike with the obverse very deep. Cameo devices. Superb russet toning which gradually strengthens to iridescent lilac and blue towards the edges.

Die State: Both dies perfect.

Narrative: The 1878-S is one of the most famous rarities in the Liberty Seated half dollar series. Indeed, even a specimen in just

Good or VG grade would be worthy of special notice.

The present prooflike gem Mint State coin ranks as one of the most important, most memorable coins in the James Bennett Pryor Collection. A simply *incredible* rarity.

The reverse die chip located at the top of the leftmost vertical stripe in the shield is plainly visible on this specimen. This die chip is an authenticity marker and is present on all genuine examples of this issue.

PCGS Population: 1; none finer.

Pedigree: *Ex Stack's, May 1973, Lot 418.*



238 1879 B-5027. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-3+.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Prooflike. Brilliant and lustrous with pale lilac on the obverse, light gold on the reverse.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Very rare in Mint State; rarer than generally known, as many Proof coins have been certified as Mint State (this is true

of other dates to follow until the end of the Liberty Seated series in 1891; it is also true of contemporary nickel three-cent pieces).

By 1879 Liberty Seated half dollars and other silver denominations were a glut on the market, this coming after the span of 1862-1876 in which they were not seen at all. Because half dollars were piling up in banks and counting houses, mintages of Liberty Seated issues were sharply reduced, virtually to the token level beginning in 1879 and continuing for more than a decade thereafter. Further, production of Liberty Seated half dollars at branch mints ceased entirely.

Even if half dollars had been needed, it would not have been easy for the Philadelphia Mint or other facilities to have made them, as they were under great pressure to coin unprecedented quantities of Morgan silver dollars mandated under the Bland-Allison Act of 1878.

PCGS Population: 49; 90 finer, finest MS-68.

Pedigree: *Purchased from Aubrey Bebee, January 29, 1966.*



- 239 1880 B-5029. MS-64, prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-4.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Prooflike and fully brilliant white obverse and reverse. Minor hairlines are visible.
Die State: Perfect.
Narrative: Very rare at this Mint State level.
PCGS Population: 12; 16 finer, finest MS-66.
Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., December 30, 1965.



- 240 1881 B-5031. MS-64 (PCGS). Prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 102. Rarity-4.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Prooflike with very deep obverse and reverse mirrored fields around cameo devices. Just a hint of faint gold with a deep steel toning spot on the middle olive leaves. This is in fact a small area of deep toning but should not be characterized as a carbon spot. There is no evidence of corrosion in this area.
Die State: Perfect.
Narrative: Far rarer in Mint State than with Proof finish. While Proofs were specifically saved by collectors who bought them at a premium, the survival of low-mintage business strikes was strictly a matter of rare chance.
PCGS Population: 19; 7 finer, finest MS-67.
Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



- 241 1882 B-5032. MS-65. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Reflective fields with cameo devices. Pale gold toning around the periphery.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Very rare in true Mint State.
PCGS Population: 7; 3 finer, finest MS-67.
Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



- 242 1883 B-5033. Proof-66 (PCGS).
Strike: Full.
Surfaces: Mirrored surfaces over delightful toning. Pearl gray at the centers blended with russet, iridescent blue, and light green towards the borders.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: A splendid gem.
PCGS Population: 5; 1 finer, Proof-67.
Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., December 30, 1965.



- 243 1884 B-5034. Proof-64 (PCGS).
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Pale ivory with faint gold. Speckled dark steel toning is noted at the top of the reverse.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: The normal date variety signifies the Proof status. In contrast, all business strikes have a slightly repunched base to the 4.
PCGS Population: 38; 19 finer, finest Proof-68.
Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



- 244 1885 B-5035. MS-63. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant satin lustre.
Die State: Perfect dies.
Narrative: Very rare in true Mint State. Far rarer than Proof.
PCGS Population: 11; 17 finer, finest MS-67.
Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., December 30, 1965.



- 245 1886 B-5036. MS-64 (PCGS). Prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4+.

Strike: Star 8 and the top hair curls are weak.

Surfaces: Prooflike. Very faint golden lilac.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Just 5,000 business strikes were minted. Exceedingly rare today in true Mint State. Many so-called "Mint State" coins are in fact Proofs.

PCGS Population: 17; 6 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



246 1887 B-5037. MS-64, prooflike. Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.

Strike: Slight weakness on the upper hair curls. All other details are sharp.

Surfaces: Prooflike.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Another great rarity in Mint State. The true nature of the rarity of the 1887 will probably never be known as published data are misleading; many Proofs have been called "Mint State."

PCGS Population: 13; 20 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



247 1888 B-5038. MS-64 (PCGS). Wiley-Bugert: 101. Rarity-4.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Mirrored fields with cameo devices. Brilliant with a faint trace of lilac peripheral toning.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: Exceedingly rare in true Mint State.

PCGS Population: 14; 19 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



248 1889 B-5039. Proof-64.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Brilliant white mirrored fields with cameo devices.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: This issue has sometimes been called "1889/8" and in fact was once listed in the *Guide Book* this way. However, all are "perfect dates."

Popular date due to its overall low mintage (combined business strike and Proof production).

PCGS Population: 29; 15 finer, finest Proof-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



249 1890 B-5040. Proof-64.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Fully cameo mirrored surfaces which are fully white.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: A beautiful specimen.

PCGS Population: 48; 24 finer, finest Proof-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.



250 1891 B-5041. Proof-64.

Strike: Full.

Surfaces: Cameo mirrored surfaces. White with faintly visible hairlines. Faint traces of pale gold are present.

Die State: Perfect.

Narrative: In business strike format this issue is now recognized as a "sleeper" among Liberty Seated half dollars. It is not surprising that this Proof example found its way into James Bennett Pryor's collection.

PCGS Population: 40; 23 finer, finest Proof-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, February 2, 1966.

1892-1915 BARBER ISSUES

The chronology of America during the 1892-1915 Barber half dollar era is filled with dramatic changes in science, technology, politics, and other areas. In 1892 the automobile was virtually unknown, by 1900 it was a curiosity, and by 1915 city streets were clogged with them, and the horse-drawn era was coming to an end. The heavier-than-air airplane, first flown by the Wright brothers in 1903, by 1915 had become a familiar sight at county fairs, and plans were being made for their employment in war and postal delivery.

In 1892 the first motion picture had yet to be projected on a screen, by 1900 "movies" were popular fillers in vaudeville shows, by 1910 just about every town and city in the United States had a nickelodeon theatre, and by 1915 Universal City opened near Hollywood, and cinema was big business. Radio was in its development stages, and following the sinking of the *Titanic* on the night of April 14-15, 1912, while on its maiden voyage, it became necessary for all large ships to have 24-hour radio service.

In the home, player pianos and phonographs were popular sources for the latest tunes as well as old favorites, while a local dance hall might well have an orchestrion which upon the

deposit of a nickel would automatically imitate an orchestra.

On the political scene "the silver question" dominated the presidential election of 1896 which pitted William Jennings Bryan (the "Silver-Tongued Orator of the Platte") against William McKinley, with the latter victorious. In 1900 the results were repeated. Following McKinley's assassination at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became president, eventually ushering in a colorful era of trust-busting, pure foods, appreciation of nature, the Great White Fleet, the capers of his daughter Alice, and, of course, the teddy bear. Roosevelt was succeeded by William Howard Taft and he by Woodrow Wilson.

England was the leading world power, and the sun was said never to set on the British Empire. Then came the World War in August 1914, and after that time America was in the ascendancy.

Coinage:

In 1891 the Mint invited artists from the private sector to submit designs for the American silver series. During this era there was a call from within the Mint itself to improve the motifs, and at one point the director submitted a budget request to hire *five* outside artists for work at the Philadelphia Mint. The request was later lowered to one artist, but nothing was done.

The 1891 outside artists' entries were reviewed by a committee of three, including famous sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and, importantly, Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber. None of the submissions was found worthy of further consideration. Without further ado, Barber created his own designs, first in pattern form in 1891 (the unique set of which is in the Smithsonian Institution today), and then in circulating form in 1892.

The inaugural year saw the new Liberty Head or "Barber" motif employed in the dime, quarter, and half dollar denominations and struck at the Philadelphia, New Orleans, and San Francisco mints. Although the Carson City Mint was still operating, its production during the last two years of activity—1892 and 1893—was limited to silver dollars and high denomination gold coins.

In 1892 citizens of the United States were excited about the World's Columbian Exposition, originally intended to open in Chicago in that year. As it turned out, the event was delayed, and the public was not invited until 1893. Much publicity was given to the new 1892 Columbian commemorative half dollar,

with the result that the new Barber dime, quarter, and half dollar motifs were virtually unnoticed by the press. Probably because of this same reason, Barber coins were not extensively hoarded for their novelty as first year of issue pieces.

Coinage of Barber half dollars was remarkably consistent at the Philadelphia, New Orleans, and San Francisco mints each produced specimens without interruption. In 1906 the Denver Mint issued coins for the first time, and in 1909 New Orleans struck its final pieces. Although the Philadelphia and San Francisco mints produced coins from the beginning of the Barber half dollar series to the end, and New Orleans was continuous from 1892 until it shut down its presses in 1909, the Denver Mint production was erratic, and no pieces were made there in 1909, 1910, or 1914.

The final Barber half dollars were struck in 1915. The Barber dime and quarter went on to one more year of production, 1916, but not so with the half dollar.

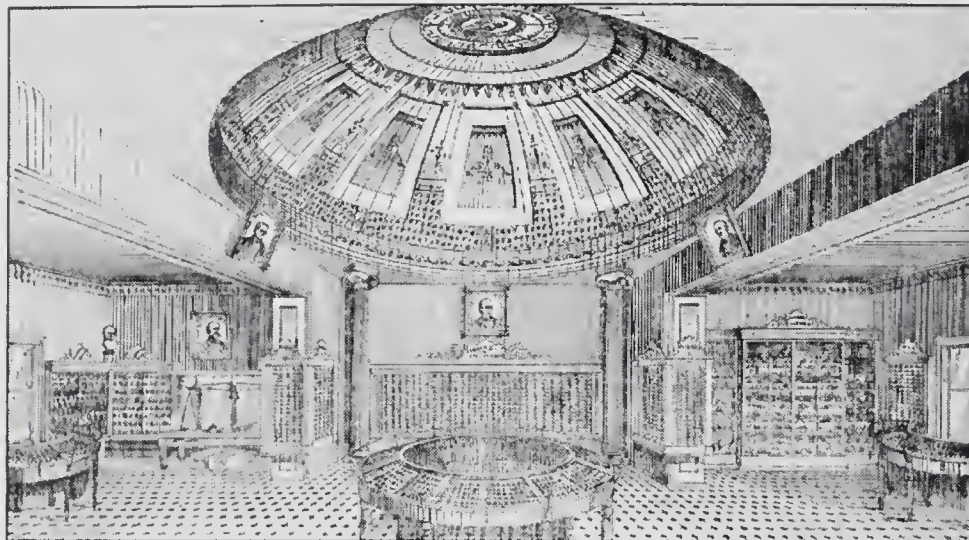
Today the rarity in Mint State of a given Barber half dollar is affected in one degree or another by the following influences:

1. Mintage: In general, low mintage varieties are rarer than high-mintage ones.

2. Age: In general, all other things being equal, varieties earlier in the series are rarer than later ones. This is because there was a growth in coin collecting during the period, with such positive forces as the founding of the American Numismatic Association (1891), the publication of Augustus C. Heaton's *Treatise on Mint Marks* (1893; this popularized mintmark collecting, but it was slow to catch on among higher denominations).

3. Deliberate saving: In general, Mint State specimens of Philadelphia Mint coins were not saved as collectors bought readily-available Proofs instead.

4. Hoards: I am not aware of any confirmed hoard of more than a handful of pieces of *any* Mint State Barber half dollar either existing or coming on the market in recent decades. However, Walter Breen in his *Encyclopedia*, pp. 410-412, writes of "rolls" saved by A.C. Gies, William L. Pukall, and Wayte Raymond. This blanket statement is subject to strong doubt, in the present writer's opinion. Re: the Barber series, neither Wayte Raymond nor William Pukall were active dealers until the Barber series was nearly ended, Raymond not becoming full-time dealer until after 1912 (previously, he was a bank



The Mint Collection on display at the Philadelphia Mint in the late 19th century. Established in 1838, by several decades later the cabinet contained a vast holding of ancient, world, and United States coins. However, mintmarked issues were not generally included. For example, the Liberty Seated and Barber issues were represented simply by a Proof of each date.

eller). While it could be argued that while a young teller he saved \$10-face-value bank-wrapped rolls on his salary, this strains credulity. William Pukall in 1914 was saving a few rolls of Lincoln cents and Buffalo nickels (per his correspondence in the archives of the present writer), but it is highly doubtful that he saved half dollars; in any event, in 1914 his business was just getting started, while at the same time the Barber series was near its end. A.C. Gies (born 1855), long-time Pittsburgh collector, is known to have saved bank-wrapped rolls of coins beginning with the year 1901, and from time to time has been cited as the source for most 1913-S Barber *quarters* surviving today in Mint State. It is believed that most of his rolls were of minor denominations, and we are not aware of him or anyone else deliberately filling in a roll set of 20th-century Barber half dollar issues. Anent rolls, Breen mentions that “at least one roll” of 1895-S turned up before 1957. If so, 1957 is in any event “ancient history” in the rare coin market, and the 20 pieces in this roll have long since been dispersed. Breen also mentions a hoard of at least five rolls (100 coins) of 1915-S turning up circa 1957. If this was so, the pieces were filtered into the market. In our own business experience, which extends from the early 1950s to date, we have never been offered an original roll of Barber halves. All of this said, if there have been a few rolls over the years, it seems that they were dispersed long ago and that the coins involved were few in number.

5. Chance: Sometimes an issue is simply overlooked. 1907-S is an outstanding example.

Beyond these considerations, there are different degrees of rarity. An issue can be relatively available in lightly struck Mint State, but a great rarity if sharply struck. Among other issues, MS-60 and other low-end coins may be plentiful, but MS-65 coins can be rare.

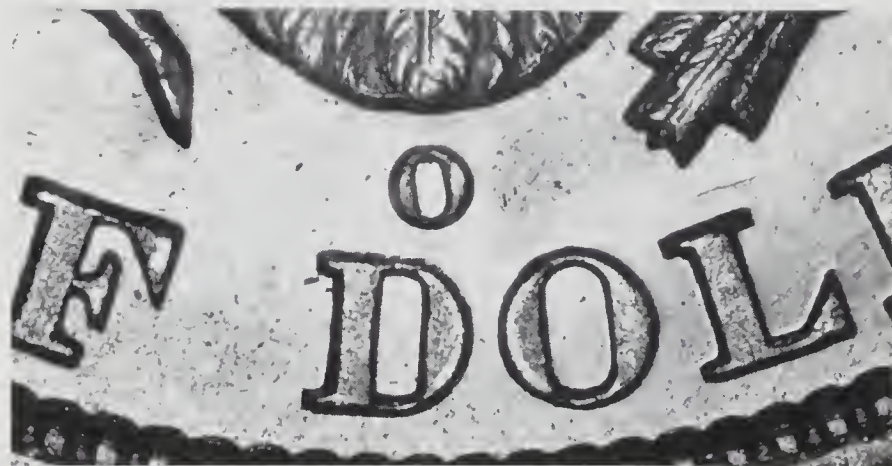
The James Bennett Pryor Collection is remarkable for the quality of the Barber half dollars it contains. Very few numismatists had his eye for quality, or had the persistence to seek it during the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s when most of these were obtained. Thus, the following section of the catalogue will be forever remembered by specialists and connoisseurs.



- 251 1892 MS-64.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant. Highly lustrous and frosty.
Narrative: Important as the first year of issue.
PCGS Population: 84; 47 finer, finest MS-67.
Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., December 30, 1965.

Attractive 1892-O

Normal O



- 252 1892-O MS-63/65.
Strike: Sharp and unusual so.
Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.
Narrative: A famous key issue due to its remarkably low mintage of just 390,000 coins, a figure that would stand as a record until much later in the series, 1913.
PCGS Population: 17; 22 finer, finest MS-65.
Pedigree: Purchased from Empire Coin Company, February 26, 1966.

Famous 1892-O “Micro O”

Exceedingly Rare



- 253 1892-O Micro O. AU-58.
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant with tinges of golden toning. Obverse somewhat matte. Reverse (the most important side of the coin in this

instance) grades MS-60 or even better and is somewhat prooflike at the centers.

Narrative: The issue is of extreme rarity, and we have handled fewer of these over the years than we have of 1838-O. The specialist and advanced numismatist will recognize this as one of the truly major opportunities in the present sale.

PCGS Population: Only three certified, MS-62, AU-50, and Good.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., November 23, 1971.

An example of this variety was displayed by Howard Rounds Newcomb (best known today for his 1944 book on late-date 1816-1857 large cents) at the American Numismatic Society Exhibition of 1914. Subsequently, the variety was listed in the *Guide Book*, where it created widespread notice (the *Guide Book* being the arbiter of what to collect and have on a want list, and what to ignore, for many people). Later, the listing was discontinued, and it became a footnote (e.g., on p. 163 of the 1996 edition).

Important 1892-S



254 1892-S MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant at the centers giving way to delicate gold, blue, and iridescent hues on the rims. Frosty and lustrous. A visual masterpiece.

Narrative: Even though the mintage of 1892-S (1,029,028) is higher than the 1892-O (mintage: 390,000), the 1892-S has emerged over the years as very important in its own right, for reasons that are not clear today. Even well-circulated specimens are rare.

PCGS Population: 16; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, Dalton Family sale, December 5, 1975, Lot 606.



255 1893 MS-63/64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. The obverse has a few marks, not unusual or detracting, defining the grade. The reverse is a clear MS-64 or MS-65. Delicate toning on the rims.

Narrative: An attractive specimen of this early Philadelphia Mint Barber half dollar.

PCGS Population: 13; 22 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.



256 1893-O MS-63.

Strike: Average for the Barber series, finer than usually seen for 1893-O. Some lightness at star 11 on the obverse and eagle's left (to the viewer's right) talon and arrow feathers on the reverse.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with beautiful delicate gold toning changing to light blue on the rims. Outstanding.

Narrative: Not easy to find with the aesthetic quality of the present coin.

PCGS Population: 18; 9 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.

Superb Gem 1893-S

Finest Certified by PCGS



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

257 1893-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with light golden toning. Pristine and beautiful, the type of quality usually seen when a coin was carefully selected to begin with and then preserved with great care over a long period of years.

Narrative: In 1893 Augustus G. Heaton published his *Treatise on Mint Marks*, a study that was eventually to make collecting mintmarks popular. At the time one could write to the various mints (Philadelphia, New Orleans, and San Francisco) and obtain selected examples of coinage. It is not difficult to envision that the

1893-S here offered may well be one of these selected specimens. In a word it is *incredible*.

PCGS Population: This is the only example graded MS-65 by either PCGS or NGC.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976, part of a nicely matched old-time set he had at the time (see other Rettew pedigrees; many of the coins are similarly toned).



258 1894 MS-65 or finer.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: This coin embodies all one could ask for—and more—of a business strike of this era. Such coins are far rarer than contemporary Proofs, for while Proofs were deliberately saved by numismatists, the survival of high-level Mint State coins was strictly a matter of remote chance.

PCGS Population: 7; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Hollinbeck-Kagin, February 26, 1966.

Cameo Prooflike Gem 1894-O

Finest Certified



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

259 1894-O MS-66 (PCGS). Prooflike.

Strike: Average for the series, above average for 1894-O. Some lightness on right-side obverse stars and on the extreme lower parts of the eagle.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Deep cameo prooflike, quite possibly struck as a presentation piece or even as a Proof. *Incredible*.

Narrative: A truly remarkable coin. Certainly one of the finest known specimens of any Barber half dollar issue.

PCGS Population: The only MS-66 specimen graded by PCGS.

Pedigree: Purchased from Empire Coin Co., March 26, 1966.



260 1894-S MS-63/65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous. Extremely appealing in every respect.

Narrative: Obtaining early mintmark Barber half dollar issues in high grades with excellent aesthetic appeal is a formidable challenge. James Bennett Pryor "did the work for you." All you have to do is bid!

PCGS Population: 18; 9 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.

261 1894-S MS-63.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satiny and somewhat prooflike. Mottled light golden toning.

Narrative: A second lovely example of this challenging issue.



262 1895 MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lightly toned gold with hints of iridescence, especially on the head of Miss Liberty and the upper third of the obverse. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of this popular date. Far rarer in high Mint State grades than in high Proof grades.

PCGS Population: 9; 2 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



263 1895-O MS-64.

Strike: Above average. Some slight weakness on certain of the right-side obverse stars, but far in the forefront of the strike usually seen with 1895-O.

Surfaces: Brilliant with gorgeous light gold and iridescent toning around the periphery and rims. Lustrous and frosty. An aesthetic "10."

Narrative: Among early Barber half dollars, the New Orleans issues are especially difficult to locate in really choice condition as offered here.

PCGS Population: 8; 6 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Ex Quality Sales, Carlson and Shipkey Collections, November 9, 1976, Lot 984.

Memorable Quality 1895-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

264 1895-S MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Attractively toned in light, delicate gold with splashes of iridescence, this being most prominent across the center of the obverse and the center and lower right of the reverse. Lustrous and frosty. A nice companion to the preceding 1895-O; the toning is of about the same delicacy and appearance.

Narrative: The 1895-S must have been placed into circulation in quantity at or near the time of its mintage, for relatively few high-grade coins survived for later generations of numismatists. In fact, in MS-60 this issue would be considered to be remarkable. In the present MS-65 preservation (and also considering its remarkable aesthetic quality), here, indeed, is a memorable half dollar, a coin for the ages.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Walter Breen (*Encyclopedia*, p. 411) mentions a roll of 20 pieces that turned up decades ago; if so, these coins have long since been dispersed.

265 1895-S MS-62 or finer.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Satiny. Lightly toned. Lightly cloudy in portions. Struck from sharply clashed dies with interesting clash marks on obverse and reverse, a particularly notable one being below Miss Liberty's ear.

Narrative: Duplicate. Probably acquired for the clash marks feature.



266 1896 MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, Lustrous and frosty. "As you like it."

Narrative: Another splendid Philadelphia Mint issue.

PCGS Population: 4; 5 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Landmark Gem 1896-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

267 1896-O MS-64 or better.

Strike: Average. Obverse fairly strong. Reverse with some lightness, quite possibly as always for 1896-O, at the intersection of the eagle's left wing (to the observer's right) and the shield.

Surfaces: Brilliant with nuances of golden toning. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A landmark specimen of one of the "rarest of the rare" in the Barber series at this grade level. As a suite the 1896-O, 1896-S, 1897-O, and 1897-S were considered decades ago to be the "big four" rarities of their era.

In modern times the market distinctions between rarities and "type" coins has blurred, with many common issues rising in price to approach the levels of traditional rarities. However, anyone wishing to consult issues of the *Guide Book* from the 1940s and early 1950s can easily see which issues were considered to be rarities in an era in which type collecting was not as popular as it is now (type-set collections became especially popular following the

market rise that began in early 1960); the introduction of the Library of Coins albums by the Coin and Currency Institute (Robert Friedberg) did much to spur interest in type coins.

PCGS Population: 5; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: From New England Rare Coin Auctions, May 26, 1978, Lot 631.

Dazzling Gem 1896-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

268 1896-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous. Very close to "as made" condition.

Narrative: An exceedingly important specimen of one of the most prized issues in the series.

PCGS Population: 7; 3 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Larry Whitlow, November 13, 1965.

Marvelous 1897-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

270 1897-O MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp, far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: James Bennett Pryor was indeed fortunate to find this beauty early in his search for high quality Barber half dollars; normally, a search of many years would be necessary. 1897-O is a prominent key date to begin with, is rarely seen in Mint State, and when seen is usually lightly struck. A truly marvelous specimen of one of the landmarks of the series.

PCGS Population: This is the third submission so graded by PCGS, with none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.

Prooflike Gem 1897-S



269 1897 MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Light golden toning in areas. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A couple of tiny lines on the obverse keep this from a significantly higher grade. However, the aesthetic appeal of the coin is second to no business strike 1897 that has ever come under our view.

PCGS Population: 27; 5 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



271 1897-S MS-64 (PCGS). Prooflike.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Prooflike, and so well preserved that under magnification many parallel raised die polish lines can be seen.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of one of the great rarities of the series.

PCGS Population: 8; 9 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Zearing, March 14, 1966.



272 1898 MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Light golden toning in areas. Lustrous and frosty. Another of the numerous coins in the present offering that are of a quality usually seen when great old-time cabinets are dispersed.

Narrative: In his *Complete Guide to Barber Halves* David Lawrence makes the poignant comment that for every Proof struck of this date there were 4,000 business strikes, but today business strikes in any Mint State level are twice as rare as Proofs. (This is because business strikes were generally ignored at their time of issue, and their survival is a matter of remote chance.)

PCGS Population: 20; 10 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Superb Cameo "Specimen" 1898-O

Possible Proof



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

273 1898-O MS-66 (PCGS). Possibly a specimen Proof.

Strike: Above average. Usually seen weakly struck. This coin is a remarkable exception. The obverse is very sharp, while the reverse has some lightness on the eagle's left wing and nearby shield region, but is far nicer than usually seen.

Surfaces: Deep cameo prooflike. Brilliant. Very closely resembling a Philadelphia Mint Proof in quality, with full gem mirror Proof surfaces on obverse and reverse. A virtually legendary coin.

Narrative: Walter Breen cites an impaired branch-mint Proof for

this issue. One of the great prizes of this series.

PCGS Population: The only MS-66 specimen graded by either PCGS or NGC, with none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Empire Coin Co., March 26, 1966.



274 1898-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average. Very sharp obverse. Reverse quite sharp save for some light striking, as customary for 1898-S, at the upper left wing edge (to the viewer's right).

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: Another splendid 19th-century Barber half dollar mintmark issue. Quality such as this often takes a long time to find.

PCGS Population: 8; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Abner Kreisberg, March 26, 1966.



275 1899 MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lightly golden toned in areas. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: Another splendid Philadelphia Mint issue. Rare so fine.

PCGS Population: 14; 9 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



276 1899 MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Gunmetal-blue and gray toning.

Narrative: Duplicate.



277 1899-O MS-62.

Strike: Above average obverse, average (for 1899-O) reverse.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: An exceptional specimen of this New Orleans issue.

PCGS Population: 5; 36 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Zearing, January 17, 1966.



278 1899-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average. Obverse sharp. Reverse sharp except for small area of left wing near shield (normal for 1899-S).

Surfaces: Mottled light gray toning in areas over deeply lustrous, frosty surfaces.

Narrative: Interesting hairline die break at neck truncation visible under magnification.

PCGS Population: 3; 6 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



279 1900 MS-63.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

PCGS Population: 24; 22 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased at a Memphis coin show, November 26, 1965.



280 1900-O MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Average (just fine for 1900-O; most are not this nice).

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: The 1900-O half dollar is a major rarity at this level, although in worn grades (especially lower-level worn grades) it is not at all remarkable. Apparently only a few Mint State coins were saved.

PCGS Population: 5; 7 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.



281 1900-S MS-63 prooflike.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Medium gold and iridescent toning. Prooflike on obverse and reverse, equal to some that have been called branch mint Proofs, and undoubtedly from the same die pairing.

Narrative: Certainly this is one of the finest known specimens from an aesthetic viewpoint. James Bennett Pryor was in the right place at the right time, quite often over a long period of years, and his efforts could not be readily equaled today, even with an unlimited budget. Perhaps most important, he was a true connoisseur and once he determined the grade level of a coin was satisfactory, he looked beyond this to find *quality*.

PCGS Population: 10; 7 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



282 1901 MS-63 or finer.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of the first issue of the 20th century.

PCGS Population: 15; 18 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Larry Whitlow, December 13, 1965.



283 1901-O MS-63.

Strike: Average to above average. Within the microcosm of 1901-O halves it is above average.

Surfaces: Light magenta toning over lustrous, frosty surfaces.

Narrative: Rarely seen in Mint State, and when seen often of a striking quality significantly below the Pryor Collection coin.

PCGS Population: 3; 8 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Sanford Durst, December 6, 1965.

Amazing Gem 1901-S Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

284 1901-S MS-64 (PCGS) with some claims to 65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A splendid, remarkable specimen of the most celebrated variety in the entire Barber half dollar series.

Apparently, very few specimens were saved at the time of issue, and it is believed that these were acquired one at a time by numismatists. The writer is not aware of any groups—even of just two or three Mint State coins—coming on the market in the past half century.

PCGS Population: 5; 3 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.

The 1901-S silver issues across the board—dime, quarter, half dollar, and silver dollar—are all recognized for their rarity. In contrast, 1901-S gold coins are plentiful.



285 1902 MS-63 or finer.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: Very difficult to find in high Mint State levels.

PCGS Population: 24; 25 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Coen-Messer, January 6, 1966.



286 1902-O MS-63 (PCGS).

Strike: Below average in the spectrum of Barber half dollars if the entire 1892-1915 series is considered. However, within 1902-O it is average or a bit better. Significantly, David Lawrence in his *Complete Guide to Barber Halves* states that "very few if any" well-struck pieces exist.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: Apparently, this was the finest James Bennett Pryor encountered over a long period of years.

PCGS Population: 2; 7 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Paramount International Coin Corporation, June 9, 1966.

Memorable Gem 1902-S

Superb MS-66



287 1902-S MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant with a nuance of golden toning. Lustrous and frosty. A sparkling and quite memorable gem.

Narrative: Very rare with this combination of high grade and superb quality. Where could you find another even close to this one?

PCGS Population: Only the second example graded MS-66 by PCGS.

Pedigree: From Stack's, E. Yale Clarke Collection, October 25, 1975, Lot 396.

Reasonable Rates!

Auctions by Bowers and Merena can make auctioning your coins or collection a pleasurable and problem-free experience. For one low commission to you, the seller, plus a fee charged to the buyer, we handle EVERYTHING—from complete insurance from the moment we acquire your coins, to cataloging, to photography (important pieces in full color), to advertising and publicity—in other words, all you have to do is figure out what to do with our generous check!

"Sleeper" Mint State 1903



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

288 1903 MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicately toned lilac and gold over lustrous, frosty surfaces.

Narrative: A numismatic prize in this grade, the mintage of 2,278,000 notwithstanding. David Lawrence in his *Complete Guide to Barber Halves* notes this is "one of the real 'sleepers' in the series," that it is "underrated and undervalued," and if more is needed, "nice, original lustrous specimens are extremely hard to find."

One can readily imagine that if Proofs did not exist of this date (thus satisfying much demand for high-grade coins, never mind that they are much more plentiful than this level of Mint State), this would be a coin that would give serious challenge to such landmarks as 1901-S and 1904-O.

PCGS Population: 1; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: From Mayflower Coin Auctions, March 3, 1966.

Delightful 1903-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

289 1903-O MS-65.

Strike: Above average obverse, average reverse (so far as we know, the reverse on 1903-O *never* comes needle sharp; thus any comment about striking may be moot).

Surfaces: Beautiful light golden, lilac, gunmetal-blue and iridescent toning over lustrous, frosty surfaces.

Narrative: A highly acclaimed rarity in Mint State. The New Orleans Mint half dollars of this era were largely overlooked at the time of their issue by numismatists, and on today's market even MS-60 through MS-63 coins are rarities, never mind the grade offered here.

PCGS Population: 2; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: From Stack's Robison Collection Sale, February 13, 1982, Lot 1769.



Museum-Quality Gem 1903-S

290 1903-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty. Superb.

Narrative: If you were to have visited the San Francisco Mint in one particular day in 1903 and were to have picked this coin from the hopper near the press, it probably would have looked like it does *now*. A truly remarkable specimen of an issue that is rarely found in this combination of high grade and quality.

It is gems such as this that are stumbling blocks to anyone seeking to assemble a high-grade set of Barber half dollars.

PCGS Population: 3; 3 finer, all MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



291 1904 MS-62.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate golden toning over frosty lustre.

Narrative: David Lawrence calls this "extremely tough in Mint State," and we agree. The same writer notes that Mint State coins are *seven times rarer* than Proofs.

PCGS Population: 8; 20 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Wexler's, December 20, 1965.

Amazing Gem 1904-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

292 1904-O MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A superb gem specimen of one of the most desired of all Barber half dollars at this grade level. Superb aesthetic appeal, high grade, sharp detail, great rarity—in a phrase, this coin has it all!

PCGS Population: 4; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Zeiring, January 17, 1966.

"Rarest Mint State" 1904-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

293 1904-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant with delicate gold toning over frosty lustre. Reverse somewhat prooflike. Tiny frosty area (from die rust?) below eagle's right wing. Superb aesthetic quality.

Narrative: David Lawrence calls this the rarest of all Barber half dollars in Mint State, and that includes the lower ranges of Mint State, never mind a gem such as this! Moreover, the same observer notes that Mint State coins, when found, are apt to be unattractive. All of this adds up to yet another landmark Pryor Collection coin, another opportunity in a sale filled with remarkable opportunities.

PCGS Population: 3; 2 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.

Gem Proof 1905



294 1905 Proof-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant mirror fields, frosty cameo devices.

Narrative: One can suppose that James Bennett Pryor in his quest for the very best was not able to find a suitable high-grade Mint State specimen of 1905, a major rarity, and opted to acquire a Proof as an interim measure. Years passed, and the Proof re

mained. Of course, in its own right the Proof is a highly desired item, particularly in the gorgeous gem preservation offered here.

PCGS Population: 23; 14 finer, finest Proof-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Pateras, January 10, 1966.

Exceptional 1905-O



295 1905-O MS-64.

Strike: Far above average. Not needle sharp, but *probably no such coin exists for 1905-O*. Indeed, David Lawrence points out that this variety is "usually lacklustre and poorly struck."

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty. Some slight trace of what David Lawrence calls "mumps" on the neck. Without a doubt one of the most attractive 1905-O half dollars in existence.

Narrative: The 1905-O is one of the lowest mintage entries in Mint records for this era. Combine this with relatively few being saved in higher grades and with the notable quality of the coin here offered, and the result is a truly exceptional coin and opportunity.

PCGS Population: 6; 7 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Zearing, March 5, 1966.

Gem 1905-S



296 1905-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A blazing gem, a Barber half dollar masterpiece.

PCGS Population: 7; 3 finer, all MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



297 1906 MS-64.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty.

Narrative: What an effort James Bennett Pryor expended to acquire one superb Philadelphia Mint business strike after another. It would have been far easier to have purchased Proofs!

PCGS Population: 25; 13 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Donald Apte, April 25, 1975.



298 1906-D MS-64.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Lustrous and frosty. Some contact marks on cheek (as on nearly all Mint State coins; the prooflike piece in the Lawrence book is not even Mint State and is described as "lightly circulated"), probably from Mint and Treasury handling.

Narrative: First year of issue from the Denver Mint, the herald of a long and illustrious series of half dollars struck there.

PCGS Population: 15; 5 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joe Flynn, Jr., December 16, 1965.

Although the Denver Mint was established formally in 1862 in the erstwhile facilities of Clark, Gruher & Co., it was not until the 20th century, and in new quarters, that coinage commenced under federal auspices. Testing of the presses began in 1905, and the first coins were struck in 1906.

Remarkably Superb 1906-O



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

299 1906-O MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant. Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: David Lawrence notes this is "tough to find from VF-30 to MS-62." One can readily imagine that tracking down a decent MS-63 would be a challenge, an MS-64 a major endeavor, and the likes of this coin—a remarkable gem with superb aesthetic appeal—well, it might be nigh impossible, save for the present opportunity.

PCGS Population: 3; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Hollinbeck-Kagin, March 26, 1966.

Elusive 1906-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

300 1906-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Gorgeous light gold and iridescent toning over lustrous frost.

Narrative: Quoting David Lawrence once again, the 1906-S is "hard to find Fine to AU." The specimen here offered is light years beyond the "hard to find" AU and stands high as one of the very finest 1906-S half dollars in existence. Once sold it may be impossible to duplicate at any price.

PCGS Population: 4; 2 finer, both MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatics, Ltd., February 20, 1976.

This coin is from the year of the great San Francisco earthquake. The San Francisco Mint, built beginning in 1870 and opened in 1873, was the only structure remaining intact in its district.



301 1907 MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with a nuance of golden toning.

Narrative: A superb specimen of an issue far rarer than Proof in high-grade business strike levels. The reverse if evaluated separately would be in an even higher grade than we suggest.

PCGS Population: 10; 1 finer, MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

This was an uncertain year in American commerce, a blip in the upward trend of commerce. However, coinage quantities were not measurably affected and, in fact, 1907 saw a record high production of Indian cents.



302 1907-D MS-64, prooflike.

Strike: Far above average. Some tiny traces of weakness at juncture of eagle's left wing and shield.

Surfaces: Glittering prooflike on obverse and reverse. Brilliant.

Narrative: A very special coin, quite possibly issued for presentation purposes or for a notable occasion now forgotten.

PCGS Population: 12; 12 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Aubrey Bebee, January 29, 1966.



303 1907-O MS-64 or finer.

Strike: Above average. For a 1907-O, this is an exceptional specimen.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty with a few hints of golden toning.

Narrative: Although Mint State specimens of 1907-O are seen on occasion, most are poorly struck. Indeed, David Lawrence calls this issue "probably the worst struck coin of the Barber half series." The striking alone of the James Bennett Pryor Collection specimen (never mind the "extra" of its outstanding grade) makes this a great prize.

PCGS Population: 20; 10 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.

Bowers and Merena Expertise!

When you consign your coins and paper money to Bowers and Merena, it will be catalogued by such well-known numismatic experts as Q. David Bowers, Mark Borckardt, Raymond N. Merena, Andrew W. Pollock III, and Frank Van Valen, backed up by full in-house facilities, including our Graphics and Photography Departments, and others. The result is a beautiful and authoritative catalogue which will highlight your numismatic material to its best advantage. Did you know that our catalogues have won more "Catalogue of the Year Award" honors (given by the Numismatic Literary Guild) than have ALL of our competitors' combined? There must be a reason!

Incredible Gem 1907-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

304 1907-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous and frosty. Some planchet striae, as made, are seen under magnification.

Narrative: This coin could not have been any nicer on the day it was made. The 1907-S is well known for its elusive character in high grades, and even an MS-60 coin would be worth special mention in an advanced collection. The James Bennett Pryor coin is absolutely *incredible*, and although it is not one of the most *famous* half dollars in the Barber series, in this grade it certainly is in the front rank of *rarity*. It is easy to contemplate that the bidder who does not take this 1907-S home may well have to wait *years* before seeing its equal, and then who knows what the price might be! Here, indeed, is one of the great prizes of the Pryor Collection.

PCGS Population: 1; 2 finer, both MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.



305 1908 MS-63.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous with a whisper of golden toning.

Narrative: Some marks on the cheek of Miss Liberty keep this from a higher grade, but the fields are virtually immaculate. A very attractive coin. Much scarcer in high-grade business strike form

than in Proof.

PCGS Population: 11; 20 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

306 1908-D MS-60.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: Some marks on the cheek and obverse keep this from a higher grade. Still a very attractive coin overall.

PCGS Population: 1; 114 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Pateras, January 21, 1966.



307 1908-O MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous, and beautiful.

Narrative: A very pleasing coin with all elements of aesthetic appeal and numismatic desirability. Tiny die break through 8 of date and neck truncation tip.

PCGS Population: 11; 21 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.



308 1908-S MS-62.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Attractive.

Narrative: The reverse probably grades a couple of points higher than the obverse. A nice specimen of an issue that is quite difficult to track down at this grade level.

PCGS Population: 3; 15 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.



309 1909 MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average. One can imagine that the Pryor Collection coins are *definitive* in this regard, as often many specimens would be reviewed in order to select "The Coin."

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with light golden and iridescent toning.

Narrative: A truly marvelous coin, one with a very generous measure of artistic and aesthetic appeal. Rare so fine.

PCGS Population: 22; 3 finer, both MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.

Landmark 1909-O Gem



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

310 1909-O MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous; obverse motifs somewhat brilliant/satiny, reminiscent of Proof silver and gold coins of 1903.

Narrative: The 1909-O half dollar is exceedingly difficult to locate in well struck Mint State. Another great "find" for James Bennett Pryor in his day, and even more of a find today, considering how rare coins have become even more widely dispersed over the years.

PCGS Population: 5; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, May 5, 1966.

The year 1909 saw the swan song of the New Orleans Mint. Established in 1838, the facility produced half dollars through 1861 and then again commencing in 1892. Of the several mints that struck half dollars over the years, the New Orleans facility was the most casual, most careless in its coinage. In order to pay less attention to the coining presses, the dies were spaced slightly farther apart than they should have been, and the result was light striking on most coins made there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Collectors of Morgan silver dollars also know well that O-Mint pieces usually come weakly defined.



311 1909-S MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Frosty and lustrous. Light golden toning.

Narrative: Another high-quality coin from an old-time collection dispersed by Joel Rettew 20 years ago. Rare at this grade level.

PCGS Population: 7; 6 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



312 1910 MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a hint of champagne toning.

Narrative: An extreme rarity at this grade level, and were it not for the availability of Proofs this coin would be talked about for a long time after the auctioneer finally cries, "Sold!" We have only seen a few really choice Mint State coins in a lifetime of professional numismatics.

PCGS Population: 19; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Coen-Messer, January 6, 1966.

Exceptional Quality 1910-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

313 1910-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with delicate golden and iridescent toning. As pretty as a picture!

Narrative: A superb specimen of an issue that is fairly scarce in Mint State to begin with, and for which most are of far less quality than offered here. If there is a single word to describe James Bennett Pryor Collection coins it is quality.

PCGS Population: 6; 3 finer, finest MS-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Joel Rettew, February 19, 1976.



- 314 1911 MS-65 (PCGS).
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with delicate golden toning.
Narrative: Far rarer than an equivalent grade Proof.
PCGS Population: 17; 2 finer, both MS-66.
Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



- 315 1911-D MS-64 (PCGS).
Strike: Sharp obverse, average reverse.
Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous, obverse somewhat prooflike. Tiny planchet lamination near star 11.
Narrative: This date turns up in Mint State with some frequency, but most specimens are below the quality of this one.
PCGS Population: 16; 15 finer, finest MS-66.
Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.

Gem 1911-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

- 316 1911-S MS-65 (PCGS).
Strike: Sharp.
Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty with a few hints of golden

toning.

Narrative: An absolutely superb coin in every respect. "Under-rated in Mint State" and "surprisingly tough AU-55 through Mint State" notes David Lawrence in his study of the series.

PCGS Population: 3; 1 finer, MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Enterprises, February 25, 1966.

- 317 1912 Proof-60.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: The obverse has been polished on the higher areas and on its own grades Proof-58. The reverse is Proof-63; how about Proof-60 for a fair average?

Narrative: Not too much to say about this one, except perhaps it was a filler for a high-grade Mint State coin that was never located.

PCGS Population: 14; 119 finer, finest Proof-67.

Pedigree: Purchased from Hall's Coins, December 17, 1965.



- 318 1912-D MS-64.

Strike: Average or slightly better (may not exist needle-sharp).

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a whisper of champagne toning.

Narrative: Quite possibly this is the most often seen Barber half dollar in Mint State, but most are not the visual equal of this coin.

PCGS Population: 37; 21 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.



- 319 1912-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. A mark on the chin and front of neck keeps this from a higher grade level, but the reverse is superb. With a hint of champagne toning.

Narrative: One of the finest we have seen of an issue that is easily located in worn grades but which emerges as a rarity at the gem level.

PCGS Population: 8; 7 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



- 320 1913 Proof-67 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant.

Narrative: A splendid gem specimen of a Proof date that is in especially strong demand due to the lack of Mint State coins on

the market. Just 627 Proofs were struck; one of the lower mintages in the series.

PCGS Population: 30; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Gem Coins, February 7, 1966.

Probably acquired with the thought that a satisfactory business strike (James Bennett Pryor's preference, due no doubt to the great challenge required) would never be acquired. But see the following lot.

Elusive Gem 1913

Mint State Rarity



321 1913 MS-64.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with delicate golden toning.

Narrative: Exceedingly rare in Mint State and several orders rarer than Proof. (Certification service data must be taken *cum grano salis* as the few extant pieces of this date in Mint State are apt to be sent in for certification because of their high value; thus population data are skewed.)

PCGS Population: 8; 8 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Not known. Probably purchased after the Proof of this year (see preceding lot).

The year 1913 commenced a run of low-mintage business strike coinage at the Philadelphia Mint that would extend to include 1914 and 1915. Mint State specimens of all three of these years are major rarities as they were ignored in their time, with collectors primarily opting to buy Proofs.



322 1913-D MS-63.

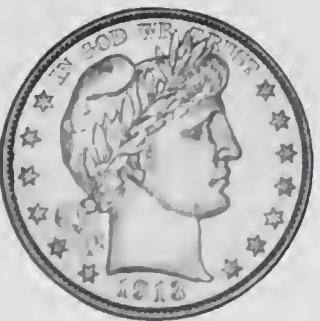
Strike: Obverse sharp; reverse average to slightly above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Nuances of golden toning.

Narrative: Common in low grades, but fairly rare at this Mint State level. Deceptively low mintage is often overlooked. A "sleeper."

PCGS Population: 23; 20 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Kleinman, December 20, 1965.



323 1913-S MS-63 to 64.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Lustrous and frosty with delicate golden toning.

Narrative: A well-known key issue. Relatively few were saved at

the time of issue. Mint State coins have always been rare. This is an especially nice one. Tiny die crack links 3 of date, neck truncation tip, and star 13 (but does not extend to rim).

PCGS Population: 12; 18 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Sanford Durst, December 6, 1965.

Legendary Gem 1914

Mint State Rarity



324 1914 MS-64 to 65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. A few flecks near the bottom of the obverse.

Narrative: The fame of the 1914 Philadelphia Mint half dollar precedes it, and in Mint State, especially *high Mint State*, its status is virtually legendary. Here is a superb gem specimen of the lowest mintage date in the entire Barber half dollar series.

PCGS Population: 15; 2 finer, both MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Empire Coin Company, December 10, 1965.



325 1914-S MS-63.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a hint of golden toning.

Narrative: A very elusive half dollar at this Mint State level.

PCGS Population: 20; 17 finer, finest MS-66.

Pedigree: Purchased from Harold April, December 30, 1965.



326 1915 MS-60/64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: The obverse has brush marks from careless handling; the reverse is gem.

Narrative: Exceedingly elusive in Mint State. Many of the comments given above under the Mint State 1914 Philadelphia coin apply to this as well, except that this has the second lowest mintage in the series. The brush marks are unfortunate, but still the coin has many merits.

PCGS Population: 1; 38 finer, finest MS-65.

Pedigree: Purchased from Mr. Durst, December 6, 1965.



327 1915-D MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.**Surfaces:** Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of one of the more popular and available varieties in the Barber series. As is true of all Mint State Barber halves, relatively few were saved at the time of issue. The face value was equal to a couple hours' wages for many people, and over a period of time some that were saved were "spent" as needed. (Which reminds the writer to say that dealer B. Max Mehl related that he once spent a Proof Barber half dollar to buy a meal on the train in the 1920s; he had just bought a coin collection, but didn't have pocket change.)

PCGS Population: 49; 17 finer, finest MS-66.**Pedigree:** Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.

328 1915-S MS-63/65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Tiny area of friction, hardly noticeable, near star 5 on the obverse, tiny mark on shield on the reverse.

Narrative: Fairly scarce in Mint State. Apparently, few were saved. Last of the Barber half dollars. Walter Breen (*Encyclopedia*, p. 412) mentions five rolls (100 coins) that turned up decades ago; if so, these coins have long since been dispersed (also see introductory comments to the Barber section of the present Pryor Collection catalogue).

PCGS Population: 38; 44 finer, finest MS-67.**Pedigree:** Purchased at a St. Louis coin show, November 13, 1965.

1916 PATTERN ISSUES

by Andrew W. Pollock III

We are pleased to offer in the lots that follow the James Bennett Pryor Collection of 1916 pattern half dollars. The collection includes three varieties, viz: Pollock-2053, 2056, and 2057. These pieces are all of great rarity; indeed, all regular-issue Liberty Walking half dollars are *common* in comparison.

It is well known to numismatists that the dime, quarter, and half dollar were all redesigned in 1916 as part of a program begun with the Saint-Gaudens gold coinage of 1907, to add an element of high artistry to the circulating denominations. The new half dollar, popularly referred to as the Liberty Walking design, was the creation of sculptor Adolph A. Weinman.

Although the Liberty Walking design upon its introduction was the object of great admiration among numismatists and

garnered uniformly favorable commentary in the press, it appears that few coin collectors, if any, were aware of the existence of 1916 pattern prototype strikings until the late 1930s. And, of course, they were made too late to be included in the 1913 Adams-Woodin reference on the series.

The 1916 half dollar patterns evidently first came to the notice of the numismatic community when an example of P-2053 was described in the April 1937 issue of *The Numismatist*, p. 312. Subsequently, it was illustrated in the June 1937 issue, p. 517.

Soon thereafter, another announcement appeared in *The Numismatist*, (see the February 1938 issue, p. 118) pertaining to the 1916 pattern half dollars. It included the contents of a letter attributed to an unidentified Mint official. The letter contains much interesting information relating to the 1916-dated half dollar patterns in general and the P-2053 variety in particular:

I wish to say that the coin [published in the 1937 announcement mentioned above]...is probably a pattern or experimental piece. Your description conforms with the original sculptor's models which are at the Mint. The dies for the coin described were destroyed in January 1917. There is no record of the number of the experimental pieces from this design, but in all probability they were very few. They have not seen one at the Mint. The sculptor Mr. Weinman, submitted three variations for the obverse of this half dollar and two for the reverse. Trial dies were made of only two of the obverse [*sic*] and two of the reverse.

The means by which the 1916 pattern half dollars left the Mint has long been a subject of speculation. Rogers M. Fred, Jr. (whose collection we showcased in our November 1995 auction), offered some interesting commentary on this subject in a letter originally quoted by Q. David Bowers in his "Numismatic Depth Study" column in *Coin World*, October 9, 1974:

Living in Leesburg [Virginia] at the present time are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Robb, who are good friends of mine. Their son, Chuck, married Lynda Johnson, daughter of President Lyndon Johnson. Frances Robb (Mrs. Charles Robb Sr.) is the daughter of Mr. Woolley, who was director of the Mint in 1916.... Mr. Woolley is dead now, but I knew him myself when we both lived in Washington in the 1930s and 1940s.

I have talked to Frances Robb many times about her father and coins, and she told me that in the 1920s her father's house was robbed. Among the things taken was a box containing coins. The thieves were not really interested in the coins as such, but since the robbery was of a general nature they took anything that had value and could be disposed of easily.

Mrs. Robb has said that her father had patterns of 1916 coinage in that box.... The 1916 patterns are very similar in design to the regular issue and it is reasonable to assume that the thieves thought that the coins were just regular issues and simply spent them. This would explain how the coins got out of the Mint....

It is probable that additional pieces were kept as souvenirs by other Mint and Treasury officials. George T. Morgan had a private "business" at the Mint and supplied rare patterns and special strikings to dealers and collectors (see the 1922 Proof Peace dollars in our Norweb Collection sale catalogue for further information).

It is the opinion of Q. David Bowers of our staff that patterns

of the Adolph A. Weinman designs for the 1916 "Mercury" dime and the 1916 Liberty Walking half dollar were made to illustrate general concepts (similar to what in graphic arts today would be called "for position only") rather than a proposal for a completely finished design. This would explain, for example, the rather "rustic" appearance of the motto IN GOD WE TRUST in tiny letters on certain patterns. In contrast, the 1916-dated patterns for Hermon A. MacNeil's Standing Liberty quarter have a more finished appearance.

Collectors of the Liberty Walking series will be delighted to

have three distinct opportunities to acquire one of the 1916 pattern issues. Indeed, even the appearance of a *single* example of these patterns is a landmark event. Currently, we would estimate not more than 25 pattern Liberty Walking half dollars of all varieties exist. Of these, several are in the Smithsonian Institution, while a few others are in very worn condition, quite possibly from the long-ago burglary mentioned above.

The James Bennett Pryor Collection offering of 1916 pattern half dollars is unprecedented in its quality and scope.

1916 Pattern Rarity P-2053

"LiberTy" Type



329 1916 pattern half dollar. Pollock-2053. Judd-1797. Matte Proof-63 (PCGS). Rarity-7. "LiberTy" type. Silver. Reeded edge. 192.1 grains. Diameter: 1.199 inches. Die alignment: 180°.

Strike: Excellent.

Surfaces: A lovely gem example exhibiting pleasing golden gray iridescence on both surfaces.

Narrative: The obverse features a figure of Liberty striding toward the sunrise with her right hand extended. She holds sprigs of laurel and oak in her left hand. In the right field, LIBERTY and IN GOD WE TRUST are expressed in large letters, *with LIBERTY being entirely unlike that on the regular issue* (which is in widely spaced letters around the border). LIBERTY appears as LiberTy (see footnote for theory).

The date 1916 is in exergue on this pattern variety. The reverse depicts a large eagle with spread wings facing left towards a mountain pine sapling, symbolic of America. Above are the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the denomination. Below is the motto E PLURIBUS UNUM. *This is a completely different arrangement of lettering from that found on the regular issue.*

P-2053 is evidently the first 1916 pattern half dollar variety that came to the attention of the numismatic fraternity as related in the section introduction above.

The presently offered example is neither the Judd Plate coin nor the piece offered in our sale of the Robert Marks Collection, November 1972, Lot 1080. Presently five or six examples are known to the writer (Andrew W. Pollock III) including two specimens in the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian Institution.

PCGS Population: This is the second submission graded by PCGS. Both have been assigned the Proof-63 grade. NGC reports two submissions, one graded Very Good and another Fine.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, April 11, 1974.

The WurliTzer connection(?): The T in "LiberTy" is overly large, possibly adopted from the WurliTzer logotype?

The music house of WurliTzer was founded in 1856 in Cincinnati by Rudolph WurliTzer, who came from Germany in 1853. The WurliTzer connection with the above 1916 pattern half dollar is not far fetched. Fanny WurliTzer, who was in charge of the firm's plant in North Tonawanda, NY, from 1909 until the 1960s, told Q. David Bowers that an advertising copy writer came up with the idea of a large T in WurliTzer as a distinctive way of spelling the name—this was well before the 1916 pattern half dollars in question—and that over the years when Mr. WurliTzer saw others copy the large letter T he would write them a little note of recognition (this was in the era when everyone didn't sue everyone else at the slightest provocation; should any interested reader of this description desire an illustration of the WurliTzer logotype, address your request in a letter to Dave Bowers and it will be sent with our compliments). The use of erratic letter sizes recurs various times in American numismatics, including "of" in the reverse lettering of both the 1948 Franklin half dollar and the 1959 Memorial reverse of the Lincoln cent.

1916 Pattern Rarity Pollock-2056

“Tiny Letters”



330 1916 pattern half dollar. P-2056. J-1798. Matte Proof-61 (PCGS). Rarity-7 to 8. Silver. Reeded edge. 194.4 grains. Diameter: 1.198 inches. Die alignment: about 170°.

Strike: Excellent.

Surfaces: Warm golden gray iridescence enhances both surfaces, similar in this regard to the preceding lot.

Narrative: The obverse motifs are somewhat similar to the adopted design, but with the letters of *LIBERTY* in tiny letters and spaced differently, and with the motto *IN GOD WE TRUST* in tiny letters and placed lower in the right field. The reverse is identical to that of P-2053 offered in the preceding lot. Plain borders.

We are presently aware of just three specimens:

1) **This specimen.** No early pedigree information is presently available apart from the Pryor Collection source pedigree given below.

2) Bowers and Ruddy, November 1972, Marks, Lot 1081; Bowers and Ruddy, May 1974, Austin, Lot 1113.

3) Smithsonian Institution, Inv. No. 1985.0551.741.

PCGS Population: This is the second example graded by PCGS with the other submission graded Proof-63. NGC reports none graded.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, April 11, 1974.

Nearly Unique 1916 P-2057

"Tiny Letters"



331 1916 pattern half dollar. P-2057. J-1799. Matte Proof-64 (PCGS). Rarity-8. Silver. Reeded edge. 192.7 grains. Diameter: 1.200 inches. Die alignment: 180°.

Strike: Excellent.

Surfaces: Warm golden brown toning enhances both surfaces. Wisps of rich charcoal gray can be seen at the rims.

Narrative: The obverse is similar to the preceding but from another die. Two differences immediately attract the viewer's attention; first: the E in LIBERTY (the word is in tiny letters) is centered over Miss Liberty's head (on P-2056, the E is to the left of center); second: Miss Liberty's left foot does not extend past the first 1 in the date (on P-2056, the foot clearly extends past the 1). IN GOD WE TRUST is in tiny letters and placed lower than on the adopted

issue. The reverse is similar to the adopted type, but without the designer's AW monogram by the tip of the tail.

Only two examples of the variety are known to us, and of these, this is the only specimen in private hands. The other piece is in the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian Institution.

PCGS Population: This is the only example graded by PCGS or NGC.

Pedigree: Purchased from William Mitkoff, April 11, 1974.

At one time James Bennett Pryor owned a fourth Liberty Walking pattern, Judd-1801. At the time he had the currently offered coin in his collection labeled Judd-1800. In a letter to Q. David Bowers he noted that he had sold the J-1801 coin because it was cleaned and because he felt there would never be a chance to acquire J-1799 to complete the set. All along, he had the J-1799 coin, but never knew it.

1916-1947 LIBERTY WALKING ISSUES

Europe was at war in 1916, but in America loyalties were divided between the English and their allies on one side and the Germans on the other. The sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German U-boat on May 7, 1915, turned the tide against the Kaiser, and in 1917 the United States entered the conflict on the side of the British. In November 1918 peace was declared, by which time America was riding an economic boom due to the war. Prosperity continued into 1920 and was followed by a lean period in 1921.

The 1920s saw Prohibition in full force, bathtub gin, cabarets, speakeasies, and flappers, the rise of elegant cars such as the Duesenberg and Pierce Arrow (even Rolls Royce of England decided to set up an American plant), Lucky Lindy, the Florida land boom, and the foreboding events on Wall Street in October 1929.

By the 1930s just about everyone who could afford one had an automobile, like as not a new Model A Ford, perhaps a Chevrolet, Buick, or Dodge, or at the upper end a Packard or Cadillac. When horses were seen—which wasn't often—they might be pulling an ice wagon, but the popularity of in-home mechanical refrigeration in the 1930s cast a shadow over equine equanimity.

On the lake a sleek-sided Hacker Craft or Chris Craft parted the waters cleanly as one traveled from dockside to an island retreat.

Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover carried America into the 1930s, after which it was Franklin D. Roosevelt for four terms, World War II, the atomic bomb, and Harry Truman.

The America of 1947, when the last Liberty Walking half dollar was struck, bore little resemblance to the nation in 1916.

Coinage:

In 1916 the American silver series was redesigned by employing artists from the private sector (which had first been done with Augustus Saint-Gaudens in 1905, whose coins had appeared in 1907). Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber's designs for the dime, quarter, and half dollar were replaced. This pleased Barber not a bit, nor did the "interference" of other outside artists earlier.

In March 1916 the Mint awarded contracts to sculptors Adolph A. Weinman for the ("Mercury") dime and half dollar and to Hermon A. MacNeil for the quarter. To learn the requirements necessary to translate models into forms suitable for high-speed coinage, both Weinman and MacNeil visited the Philadelphia Mint in March. They found a stony reception from Chief Engraver Barber, but a warm greeting and much cooperation from his assistant, George T. Morgan.

After due preparation of several models and the creation of a few pattern designs, what we know today as the Liberty Walking half dollar made its appearance in circulation near the end of 1916. The annual *Mint Report* described the design as follows:

The design of the half dollar bears a full-length figure of Liberty, the folds of the Stars and Stripes flying to the breeze as a background [actually, Miss Liberty was clothed in the flag], progressing

in full stride toward the dawn of a new day, carrying branches of laurel and oak, symbolical of civil and military glory. The hand of the figure is outstretched in bestowal of the spirit of liberty.

The reverse of the half dollar shows an eagle perched high upon a mountain crag, his wings unfolded, fearless in spirit and conscious of his power. Springing from a rift in the rock is a sapling of mountain pine, symbolic of America.

Liberty Walking half dollars were struck continuously at the Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco mints through 1921, then intermittently through 1933, and yearly after that time, but sometimes at just two of the three mints.

Historian Don Taxay in *U.S. Mint and Coinage* notes: "Most specimens issued prior to World War II are too weak to show the striated (for red) stripes, the branch hand, or Miss Liberty's headgear."

In the period from 1916 to the 1930s Liberty Walking half dollars were collected only by a few, and little attention was paid to their striking quality. To achieve high-speed production with minimum wear it was Mint practice to space the dies slightly farther apart than was optimal, and the result was inevitably some weakness on the areas in higher relief. This is standard for the early series, as specialists know. In 1923 the hub was strengthened, and after this time the striking sharpness is sometimes better, but usually this improvement in the hub was negated by the mint practice of spacing the dies too far apart.

Among later dates, the striking varies and is usually best among Philadelphia Mint coins, next best with Denver issues, and the lightest defined with San Francisco coins (especially during World War II). Despite attempts to improve the sharpness, there are many issues for which *no* fully-struck specimens are known to exist. In his *Encyclopedia*, p. 412, Walter Breen notes that the only issues that are fully struck are the following:

Really sharp strikes [note that Breen did not say *fully struck*] occur only on the extremely rare satin-finish Proofs of 1916-1917 and the old-style brilliant Proofs of 1936-1942. Full branch-hand coins are extremely rare or (in many dates) unknown....

In our cataloguing of the James Bennett Pryor Collection coins we have noted the striking characteristics. A coin described as above average or far above average ranks as one of the very finest of its date and mintmark; even so, as these are business strikes, not Proofs, the striking is not absolutely full (nor do such coins exist anywhere, for the most part).

It is worth noting that certified population data, while interesting, are not particularly relevant to the true population of known pieces. The reason is that high-grade, high-value pieces are proportionately certified in larger numbers than lower specimens. Thus, just about every 1923-S with a claim to a middle or high Mint State grade has been submitted for certification, but there is no particular financial incentive to submit a VF, EF, or AU. As much of the "scientific research" published on rarity these days has to do with reading certification reports, but not combining it with actual hands-on experience in the marketplace, this caveat should be remembered.

Pedigree details are not available for James Bennett Pryor's

Liberty Walking half dollars. Like as not, as evidenced by their extraordinary quality, he selected them one at a time with great care, calling upon a number of different suppliers. His untiring quest for perfection yielded what is the finest collection of Liberty Walking half dollars we have ever offered at auction. See the narrative note under 1920-S for a typical example of his efforts to get the best.

332 1916 MS-64.

Strike: Above average when all aspects are considered. Sharp on the hand and cape, average on the skirt. Superb reverse details. The lustre in the fields is somewhat matte, as is normal on 1916 coinage, occasioning some observers to wonder if they were struck from Proof dies (they were not). Usual wide rims as seen this year.

Surfaces: Brilliant with some toning. A very pleasing coin from an aesthetic viewpoint.

Narrative: Always popular as the first year of issue.

PCGS Population: 153; 105 finer, finest MS-66.



333 1916-D MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Exceptional, indeed, extraordinary. A showpiece for this aspect alone, never mind the beauty of its appearance. One can envision that James Bennett Pryor looked a long time before finding this coin. Usual wide rims for this issue.

Surfaces: Brilliant and very frosty. Gorgeous.

Narrative: The mintmarks D and S were placed on the obverse of half dollars this year and in early 1917, the first time this side of the coin was used for this purpose since the 1839-O half dollar.

PCGS Population: 14; none finer, all MS-66.



334 1916-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average. Well detailed on the flag cape, Miss Liberty's right hand, and head. With some lightness at the centers as virtually always (absolutely always?) seen. With the flat rims characteristic of the 1916 issues (and some of 1917).

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: A notable specimen of one of the harder issues to find with even an average strike, never mind above average as seen here. In all grades the 1916-S is the rarest of the three varieties of the year. Popular style with obverse mintmark.

PCGS Population: 71; 39 finer, finest MS-67.

335 1917 MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with some golden toning in areas.

Narrative: A popular date, and one of the few early issues that can be found in decent condition without too much effort. Nevertheless, above average strikes as offered here are in the distinct minority.

PCGS Population: 125; 29 finer, finest MS-67.

336 1917-D Obverse mintmark. MS-60.

Strike: Above average. Somewhat light at the centers.

Surfaces: Brilliant with a whisper of golden toning. Contact marks usual for the grade. Flat style (style of 1916) rims.

Narrative: Struck in early 1917. Obverse mintmark.

PCGS Population: 8; 260 finer, finest MS-66.



337 1917-D Reverse mintmark. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average on the obverse, but with some slight (and normal) lightness at the center. The reverse is sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a tinge of golden and iridescent toning around the rims.

Narrative: The 1917-D is considered quite difficult to find in higher grades, and when found many of them have unsatisfactory strikes. Although not immediately considered as a rarity by the layman, in choice, attractive Mint State it is indeed rare.

PCGS Population: 38; 14 finer, finest MS-66.

Landmark 1917-S Gem

Obverse Mintmark



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

338 1917-S Obverse mintmark. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average, say in the top 10% of extant coins strike-wise. Some lightness at the obverse center and a touch of lightness on the reverse. Flat style (style of 1916) rims.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty. Very attractive.

Narrative: The 1917-S with mintmark on obverse has been a

well-known landmark in the series for many years, due not only to its elusive character (which extends to all grades) but because of its obverse mintmark. It is significant to mention that the grading services (PCGS, NGC, ANACS) do not consider the striking when labeling their findings as MS-60, MS-61, etc.; thus there is no way of knowing how rare 1917-S half dollars of *above average strike* are, except by personal experience and observation. The coin offered here is one of the nicer ones.

PCGS Population: 25; 13 finer, finest MS-67.

Remarkable Gem 1917-S

Reverse Mintmark



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

339 1917-S Reverse mintmark. MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average. Some slight weakness at the center, but probably in the top 10% of extant coins quality-wise.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty, even "flashy." A few toning flecks are present. An eye-popping coin from a visual viewpoint.

Narrative: This issue is often seen with an indifferent or even flat strike. The present specimen is a rarity so fine and will be a centerpiece in the collection of its next owner. Few equals exist anywhere.

PCGS Population: 14; 4 finer, both MS-66.



340 1918 MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a nuance of toning.

Narrative: A far above average coin from any aspect of evaluation. Several orders rarer than 1917 in this state of preservation.

PCGS Population: 74; 38 finer, finest MS-66.

Memorable Gem 1918-D



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

341 1918-D MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average; probably in the top 2% of extant coins in this regard. There are some areas of lightness at the centers, but we do not ever recall seeing or hearing of one that is better struck.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Exceedingly rare in the gem grade offered here. A find for the connoisseur.

PCGS Population: 53; 15 finer, all MS-65.

Beautiful Gem 1918-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

342 1918-S MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average strike, and in this regard the comments given for 1918-D are appropriate to its cousin also.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: A splendid specimen of one of the Liberty Walking half dollar dates that is easy enough to find in worn grades, but which emerges as a rarity at the gem level. Another "find" for the bidder, as we are sure it was in its time for James Bennett Pryor.

PCGS Population: 60; 17 finer, all MS-65.

Superb 1919-D

Mint State Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

344 1919-D MS-64 (PCGS) or possibly finer.

Strike: Far above average. None seen better.

Surfaces: Brilliant with a satiny lustre; a nice twin to the preceding.

Narrative: A remarkable specimen of a date and mintmark long recognized as a key at the gem level. Most are quite weak. While the present coin is not needle sharp, it is quite possible that none are. A great combination of high grade, high rarity, and high aesthetic appeal.

PCGS Population: 26; 4 finer, finest MS-66.

"Definitive" 1919



343 1919 MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant with a satiny lustre. Nuances of golden toning.

Narrative: A virtually *definitive* half dollar for this date. We have never seen one with nicer aesthetic appeal. This the rarest Philadelphia Mint issue in this reach of the series, in fact, until 1921.

PCGS Population: 26; 12 finer, finest MS-67.

Attractive Gem 1919-S



345 1919-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average. If a nicer one exists it has never come under our view. In sharp, almost startling contrast to the weak strikes usually seen.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty with a hint of golden toning.

Narrative: A superb gem specimen of one of the most famous of all Liberty Walking half dollars at the Mint State level.

PCGS Population: 20; 7 finer, all MS-66.

Splendid 1920

Condition Rarity



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

346 1920 MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Frosty and lustrous.

Narrative: A far above average specimen of a Philadelphia Mint half dollar that is not rare in absolute numbers, but which with this aesthetic quality is indeed hard to find. In fact, we imagine that months of searching would not yield a duplicate.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Lovely Gem 1920-D



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

347 1920-D MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. About as nice as the day it was minted!

Narrative: Here is another remarkable coin in the James Bennett Pryor set that is remarkable throughout. To achieve the equal of the *quality* offered here would be a multi-year project. The 1920-D is rare enough in any Mint State level, but at the gem echelon it is, as some say, "prohibitively" rare.

PCGS Population: 2; none finer.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Superb Gem 1920-S

348 1920-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a hint of golden toning.

Narrative: A superb coin in this impressive set, a gem which has very few equals quality-wise. Apparently, this is the pick of a group of gems, as per Bruce Fox's book, *The Complete Guide to Walking Liberty Half Dollars*, p. 56: "James Bennett Pryor tells of purchasing a mini-hoard of quality specimens in 1977. There were at least five fully struck gems in the group." Any appreciation of what James Bennett Pryor did while collecting must take notice of his indefatigable quest for quality. Buying five gem specimens of a rarity such as this in order to take his pick of just one is typical.

PCGS Population: 22; 2 finer, both MS-66.

Beautiful Gem 1921 Rarity

Key Philadelphia Issue



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

349 1921 MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with nuances of light gold. Under magnification some interesting *raised* die lines can be seen in the area of IN GOD WE TRUST. Faint evidence of die clashing is seen just below the star-spangled flag-cape. Reverse with some light clash marks from the obverse sun are seen at the eagle's head, one connecting the eagle's lower beak with its right wing.

Narrative: In the annals of Liberty Walking half dollars the 1921 has always stood high above other Philadelphia Mint dates because of its record low mintage. Although a few Mint State pieces survived, most examples were quickly put into circulation in this recession year. The wartime boom that began in a large way in 1916 ended in 1920, and coinages in nearly all series (silver dollars being exceptions because of pork-barrel considerations—coin 'em, melt 'em, coin 'em again) were reduced.

PCGS Population: 55; 20 finer, finest MS-66.

Superb Gem 1921-D Rarity

Lowest Mintage



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

350 1921-D MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, satiny lustre on obverse and reverse.

Narrative: Of all Liberty Walking half dollars from all three mints, the 1921-D registered the lowest production figure, just 208,000 coins. For decades this issue in gem grade has been the Holy Grail of the specialist in the series, combining as it does the elements of quality, rarity, and aesthetic appeal. A highlight of the James Bennett Pryor Collection.

PCGS Population: 14; none finer.

Helpful Hints

Most of our clients receiving this catalogue will bid by mail. With many years of experience in the field, we have refined mail bidding to a very easy procedure. Please read our Terms of Sale, found in the front of the catalogue, which outline our policies, and also give many helpful hints on how to increase your bidding success. Then, send your bid sheet to us. We'll do the rest!

Landmark 1921-S Rarity

“Rarity of Rarities”



351 1921-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Frosty and lustrous; brilliant with subtle champagne toning. One of the very finest in existence anywhere.

Narrative: Although the mintage of 1921-S at 548,000 exceeds that of the 1921 and 1921-D, fewer were saved in Mint State. Consequently, today this is viewed as the rarity of rarities at this level. In 1921 very few numismatists saved half dollars by date and mintmark varieties. Albums to collect them by sequence were not devised until later in the decade (by M.L. Beistle, of Shippensburg,

PA, who is also remembered for his fine book on half dollar die varieties) and not extensively marketed until Wayne Raymond undertook their distribution in the 1930s. By the time that a strong demand developed in the 1930s, Mint State 1921-S halves had mostly disappeared. Even “name” collections formed during this and later decades were apt not to have a Mint State 1921-S, or if they did, the coins were not gems. In a sale filled with notable coins, this certainly is one of the great landmarks.

PCGS Population: 6; 1 finer, MS-66.

Selected Quality 1923-S

352 1923-S MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. Exceptional.

Narrative: The 1923-S was produced in an era in which very few numismatists cared about saving dates and mintmarks in the half dollar series. After 1921, production of this denomination for circulation was very intermittent, with no pieces being made in 1922, 1924-1926, or 1930-1932 (although commemorative coins were made during the years 1922 and 1924-1926).

PCGS Population: 16; 3 finer, all MS-66. (However, for the 1923-S or any other Liberty Walking half dollar it is good to keep in mind that population data are highly inaccurate from a scientific or reality viewpoint; see comment under the introduction to the Liberty Walking series.)

Mention should be made of the "other" 1923-S half dollar, the commemorative issued for the Monroe Doctrine Centennial (see later listing).



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Gem 1927-S

353 1927-S MS-65.

Strike: Far above average; quite memorable in this regard as nearly all of its cousins are flatly struck.

Surfaces: Lustrous. Obverse toned a brilliant, light inky blue with areas of magenta. Reverse with light magenta and lustrous silver.

Narrative: The 1927-S half dollars were struck without care given to quality, and the result is that today nearly all are poorly struck. In his *Complete Guide to Liberty Walking Half Dollars* Bruce Fox notes: "Rare with a better than average strike. Extremely rare in fully struck gem condition.... I have never seen a fully struck gem specimen, and perhaps none exist."

PCGS Population: 19; 1 finer, MS-66.



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

Incredible 1928-S

354 1928-S MS-66.

Strike: Far above average; extraordinary.

Surfaces: Lustrous with beautiful light to medium sea green, magenta, and iridescent toning. Worthy of inclusion in an art exhibit!

Narrative: The scenario surrounding the 1927-S is apropos of the 1928-S as well: high-speed production without a numismatic care; result: mostly flat coins. Bruce Fox's *magnum opus* is illustrated with a flat-struck coin, and the same writer went on to say that with sharp details the 1928-S, if anything, is even rarer than the 1927-S.

PCGS Population: 3; none finer.

Pedigree: Purchased from Gene Edwards. Called "MS-65++ Full Strike."



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)



355 1929-D MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: At last! The first issue in the twilight years of the decade to at least occasionally come on the market with a decent strike. A splendid coin that will stand on its own among the best. Simply beautiful!

PCGS Population: 13; none finer.

Exceptional 1929-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

356 1929-S MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: One of the finest specimens we have seen or handled. Some virtually microscopic die breaks are of interest and are found on the eagle's rock-perch. The old order endeth with the 1929-S, after which there was a coinage hiatus. Beginning in 1933 half dollars were struck continuously but not necessarily at all three mints.

PCGS Population: 12; none finer.

Superb Gem 1933-S



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

357 1933-S MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a hint of champagne toning.

Narrative: From 1930 through 1932 no half dollars were struck at any Mint. It was the time of the great financial Depression, and coinage of all denominations was reduced sharply.

PCGS Population: 24; 4 finer, all MS-67.

358 1934 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty. "As you like it."

Narrative: Beginning with this issue Philadelphia Mint half dollars become generally available in Mint State, not necessarily of the quality that James Bennett Pryor collected and which we offer here, but at least brilliant and at the MS-64 and MS-65 level. This said, keep in mind that unless noted otherwise, the Liberty Walking half dollars to follow are all selected specimens.

359 1934-D MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty.

Narrative: Quite scarce, far more so than the generous mintage might seem to indicate.



360 1934-S MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty with some delicate golden toning. Splendid, as are all the half dollars from this year in the Pryor Collection.

Narrative: A highly important issue of the 1930s. It should be reiterated that half dollars of this decade are in especially strong demand as many numismatists begin their collections with 1933 and do not extend back to the earlier dates, at least not in Mint State.

361 1935 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average; indeed, remarkable.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Popular date.



362 1935-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average and certainly among the finest known. Full strikes may not exist. Bruce Fox notes that "Rarity ratings do not consider strike characteristics; if they did, 1935-D MS-65 coins would be Rarity 8 [just two or three known] for fully struck examples." The same author went on to relate that "I have never seen a fully struck 1935-D." So there!

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: A very pleasing coin, far above the usual specimen.

363 1935-S MS-64.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with a hint of golden toning.

Narrative: Attractive.

364 1936 MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Gorgeous!

365 1936-D MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Really choice.

366 1936-S MS-64.

Strike: Far above average; indeed, *definitive*.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: "Fully struck gems are difficult to find" (Bruce Fox).

367 1937 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Nice.

368 1937-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Lustrous with a whisper of champagne toning.

Narrative: Very choice.



369 1937-S MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Bruce Fox notes that gems are not common and that many sub-par coins are around. No problem with this gem.

370 1938 MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous with a wink of golden toning on the reverse.

Narrative: Quite possibly the scarcest of the Philadelphia Mint halves in the 1930s in Mint State; certainly the scarcest of those struck later in the decade.

371 1938-D MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous; apparently from a well-finished die (not always the case with 1938-D). A few hints of golden toning. Exceptional.

Narrative: With a production quantity of only 491,600 coins the 1938-D has the lowest mintage figure since 1921. Over a span of decades we have handled just one bank-wrapped roll of 20 pieces. The variety is indeed scarce within the context of its era, and when found, the 1938-D is usually seen one at a time.

372 1939 MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Nonpareil.

373 1939-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Popular issue.

374 1939-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Very attractive.

375 1940 MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Nice in every respect.



376 1940-S MS-66.

Strike: Above average, far finer than normally seen, nearly full details.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: The 1940-S is nearly always seen flatly struck. This coin is a marvelous exception and should attract commensurate bids.

377 1941 MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Not rare.

378 1941-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Very attractive.



379 1941-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average. Although it is not needle-sharp (possibly non-existent such) it has a great deal of detail and, in fact, is among the top 2% of known specimens quality-wise.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: The 1941-S is the key issue of the 1941-1947 era, often called a "short set." Several varieties of albums and holders were made to accommodate Liberty Walking halves of this date span, and thus "short sets" became a specialty unto themselves.

380 1941-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average. Probably in the top 5% to 10% of extant specimens in this regard.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Duplicate.

381 1942 MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Not rare, but certainly beautiful.

382 1942-D MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Deluxe.

383 1942-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average; certainly in the top echelon, but not needle sharp (are any?).

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Plentiful in Mint State, somewhat rare if a decent strike, even rarer if as nice as the present coin.

384 1943 MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous with delicate golden toning.

Narrative: Superb.

385 1943-D MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and lustrous.

Narrative: Among the sharper specimens we have seen.

386 1943-S MS-66.

Strike: Above average, but not needle-sharp. Probably in the top 5% quality-wise of extant specimens.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: A choice find for the specialist. Most coins are quite weak (check the Bruce Fox plate coin, for example).

387 1944 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: A great chance to buy a James Bennett Pryor Collection coin for your type set. Not rare in this grade.

388 1944-D MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Somewhat scarce when as nicely struck as this specimen.

389 1944-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Usually seen quite flat (e.g., the Bruce Fox plate coin). The present coin is a marvelous exception.

390 1945 MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Most specimens are in lower grades and sharpness.

391 1945-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: An attractive example of this popular issue.

392 1945-S MS-65.

Strike: Above average; among the finest seen.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous. Some marks from the original planchet are seen at the center obverse (that these are from the planchet rather than from post-minting contact is evident from the pristine nature of the fields of the coin; this is a little-discussed, but very important aspect of numismatics).

Narrative: An exceptional specimen of an issue usually seen flatly struck.

393 1946 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: A common date but with a relatively uncommon sharpness of strike.

394 1946-D MS-65.

Strike: Average to slightly above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Lowest business strike mintage since 1938-D.

395 1946-S MS-66.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Usually seen flatly struck (e.g., Bruce Fox plate coin). Not rare as a date and mintmark with ordinary striking characteristics, but quite elusive when the equal of the presently offered coin.

396 1947 MS-65.

Strike: Far above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: A pleasing coin in every respect.

397 1947-D MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, lustrous.

Narrative: Last issue of the illustrious Liberty Walking series.

1948-1963 FRANKLIN ISSUES



The years from 1948 to 1963 saw many changes in the American scene including the presidencies of Harry S Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and a few months of Lyndon Johnson. The Cold War was at its chilliest, Elvis Presley and rock and roll were on the airwaves, television was just beginning to become popular, air travel, including by new Boeing 707 jets brought distant resorts within the easy reach of vacationers, cars sprouted tail fins, Sputnik launched the space age, McDonald's began business, and no one had ever heard of AIDS.

398 **Set of Franklin half dollars** including all date and mintmark issues of the business strike series. This set has an average grade of MS-64, some with full bell lines. (Total: 35 pieces).

399 **Additional Franklin half dollars** Including the following issues ☆ 1950-D MS-64 ☆ 1953-D MS-64 ☆ 1957 MS-65 ☆ 1962 MS-64 ☆ 1963 MS-64. (Total: 5 pieces).

1892-1954 COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES

The "classic" era of commemorative half dollars began in 1892 with fanfare when coins were produced for the World's Columbian Exposition. The series ended with a whisper in 1954 when the long-running Carver-Washington series finally ended, but few cared. In between these two issues were many other single coin types, varieties, and sets, some of which have fascinating historical backgrounds.

The James Bennett Pryor Collection consists of the major types plus a number of interesting and often rare sets and varieties. The condition and striking quality are both of a high order of excellence. Many of the coins are exquisitely and delicately toned and are among the most attractive we have had the pleasure of cataloguing. Some of those we call "MS-65" are finer than those we have seen graded MS-66 or even MS-67 elsewhere, and virtually to a coin, each is far above average in aesthetic quality and appeal.

Pieces that are fully struck are marked "sharp" (in lieu of expanded commentary).



400 1921 Alabama Centennial. Plain. MS-65.

Strike: Above average; probably in the top 10% quality-wise of known specimens.

Surfaces: Brilliant with typical lustre for the issue (somewhat subdued).

Narrative: Alabama commemorative half dollars were primarily sold to the public, not to numismatists. Relatively few were handled carefully, with the result that today high-grade coins are very difficult to locate.

Pedigree: Purchased from Allied Coin Investments, Inc., November 13, 1986.

This commemorative was two years late for a 100th anniversary that was actually celebrated in 1919. The obverse features the accolated busts of Alabama's governors W.W. Bibb and T.E. Kilby, the latter alive at the time and thus significant as the first living person ever to be depicted on a legal tender United States coin (although living people had been depicted on U.S. currency earlier).



401 1921 Alabama Centennial. 2X2. MS-64.

Strike: Above average; probably in the top 10% quality-wise of known specimens.

Surfaces: Brilliant and frosty, perhaps more frosty than usually seen. Delicate golden toning is seen on the periphery. A beautiful specimen of this hard-to-find (in high grades) variety.

Narrative: Although high-grade Mint State coins are elusive today, they survived in a significantly higher proportion to their mintage than did the 1921 Alabama without the 2X2.

Pedigree: Purchased from David Berg, February 1, 1985.

The 2X2 imprint in the right field of the obverse signifies Alabama's status as the 22nd state in the Union. This feature was added to create a variety for numismatists and others who then had to buy two coins instead of just one to complete their collections.

402 1936 Albany Charter. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Highly lustrous and brilliant with lightly mottled golden brown at the borders.

Narrative: Most pieces of this issue were sold to numismatists and speculators, not to the general public. The result is that quality examples such as the Pryor Collection coin can be located today without undue difficulty.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1986, Lot 3598.

A rather obscure event in American history was the 250th anniversary in 1936 of the Albany, NY, charter. But, this was in 1936 at the height of the commemorative market, and the philosophy was that anything goes.

403 1937 Antietam. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: The 75th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam furnished the focal point for this. Advertisements for it were placed in *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* and *The Numismatist*, and

were sold nearly entirely to collectors. Marketing was not an easy effort as by 1937 the peak of the commemorative boom had passed.

Today the Antietam is very popular with numismatists due to its low distribution figure (18,028) and Civil War motif.

Pedigree: *Ex Kagin's January 1979, Lot 805.*

404 1936 Arkansas Centennial PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (for the issue; the die relief, especially on the obverse, is low—as made). Well-matched toning among the three coins.

Surfaces: Satiny lustre with delicate toning.

Narrative: One of several sets issued in the Arkansas Centennial series, the 1936 coins from three mints was distributed to the extent of 9,600 sets. The coins in this trio have particularly mark-free surfaces. As specialists know, Arkansas coins are quite difficult to find in higher grade levels. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: *Purchased from George Rush, November 6, 1979.*

405 1939 Arkansas Centennial PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (but see preceding commentary). Well-matched toning among the three coins.

Surfaces: Satiny and lustrous with light golden toning.

Narrative: The 1939 Arkansas set is the rarest of its design and, indeed, one of the lowest-mintage sets among 20th century legal tender coins. Just 2,100 sets were issued, these under somewhat questionable circumstances as the franchise holder stated early that he was “sold out,” but later he happened to have some sets for sale at higher than the original issue price. (The same scenario was repeated elsewhere in the 1930s including with the 1935 “Small 1934” Boone sets and the 1936 Cincinnati sets.).

Today the low mintage of the 1939 Arkansas set has made it a favorite with collectors. Nearly all sets we have seen on the market in recent years have been dipped. This set is an exception. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, February 1985, Lot 1549.*

406 1936-S Bay Bridge. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Satiny lustre as always seen. Delicately golden toned surfaces.

Narrative: The opening of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was deemed a good reason to issue a legal tender commemorative half dollar, and this was done.

The motifs by Jacques Schnier depict a grizzly bear on the obverse and a very detailed scene of San Francisco Bay on the reverse. The latter side seems to be more medallic than coin-like, and there are no smooth or open field areas. The water in the Bay is represented by lines. The intricate nature of the reverse motif is such that a coin can show extensive handling on the obverse, but the reverse will appear pristine.

Pedigree: *Ex Steve Ivy, May 1983, Lot 2299.*

407 1934 Boone Bicentennial. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous and with the nicest light golden and iridescent toning you'd ever hope to find. A delicacy!

Narrative: This issue was produced to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Daniel Boone's birth, but it soon developed into a numismatic pork barrel when the anniversary kept being celebrated year after year, until 1938 in fact!

Pedigree: *Purchased from O'Carmony's Coins, January 30, 1986.*

Distribution of the Boone Bicentennial half dollars was by C. Frank Dunn, who maintained premises in two non-adjacent rooms on the second floor of the Phoenix Hotel in Lexington, KY. Dunn paid face value for the coins from the Treasury, plus nominal preparation charges, and was allowed (as were other distributors) to set whatever retail price he wished. He severely abused the privilege, issued misleading news releases and wrote untruthful articles (including for publication in *The Numismatist*), and otherwise engaged in deception. Faced with legal action, he later transferred the business to his wife's name. Anyone wishing further details has but to consult *Commemorative Coins of the United States: A Complete Encyclopedia*, by Q. David Bowers.

408 1935 Boone, “Small 1934,” PDS set. MS-65-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous with light golden toning. Well-matched toning among the three coins.

Narrative: A particularly choice trio of the most controversial and most rare of all classic commemorative issues. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: *Ex NASCA, December 1981, Lot 2983.*

This is the set that was front row center in the commemorative scandals of the 1930s and is the set that ignited the coin market boom. After many 1935 PDS sets of Boone “Bicentennial” halves were marketed, C. Frank Dunn came up with a new ploy. A limited-edition version of the 1935 set with the additional date “1934” in small numerals on the reverse was issued.

While 10,000 specimens of the 1935 “Small 1934” set were distributed, the Denver and San Francisco versions were limited to just 2,000 coins. In numismatics nothing fires the imagination more than a low mintage figure, and this tiny amount did the trick. In fact, it was the smallest figure registered for any legal tender 20th-century silver coin to that point, and even today in 1996 the record stands.

Dunn publicized the low-mintage pair of D and S coins through news items carried in the New York City newspapers and elsewhere and also to his mailing list. Orders came pouring in, at which time Dunn returned many if not most, stating that there were no more coins available. The price multiplied from the issue figure of \$3.70 per pair to as much as \$80, at which point Dunn just happened to have some more sets for sale, these being “repurchased from customers” and sold through his second office down the hall from the first. The rapid rise in price set off a speculative fever, and for the next half year or so, extending well into the year 1936, just about any commemorative coin placed on the market sold quickly.

409 1935 Boone PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous with light golden toning. A nice complement to the preceding set and, like it, evenly matched across the three coins.

Narrative: This is the regular (non-exploitative) version without “Small 1934.”

Pedigree: *Ex Superior Galleries, February 1985, Lot 1552.*

410 1936 Boone PDS set. MS-65-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Ditto to the preceding set.

Narrative: Distribution of this issue was limited to 5,000 coins each from Denver and San Francisco and 12,000 from Philadelphia. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: *Purchased from Rare Coin Investments of Ramsey, January 30, 1986.*

411 1936 Bridgeport Centennial. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Light and somewhat streaky light magenta and gold toning over virtually flawless surfaces. Seldom seen this nice.

Narrative: Pictured on the obverse of this popular half dollar is Phineas Taylor Barnum, who Walter Breen once characterized as the “patron saint of coin collectors,” a tongue-in-cheek comment on commemorative market exploitations of the 1930s.

Pedigree: *Purchased from David Berg, July 27, 1984.*

Although today P.T. Barnum is remembered for such sayings as “There's a sucker born every minute” and “Every crowd has a silver lining,” in real life he brought joy and happiness to many people, gave large sums to those in need, honored many debts that he could have avoided, and was a benefactor to his home town (where his manse Iranistan was built) of Bridgeport. His biography, *Struggles and Triumphs*, readily available today in most used book stores, is very interesting reading.

412 1925-S California Diamond Jubilee. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Especially lustrous and frosty (as normal for this issue, but unusual among its contemporaries of other designs except Vancouver). Delicate golden toning.

Narrative: This popular and quite artistic issue depicts a kneeling miner panning for gold in the days of 1849. The coin has a somewhat sculpted appearance with irregular fields (somewhat like the 1934 Maryland Tercentenary in this regard) and is among the most popular coins of its era. No less an observer (and participant) in the early commemorative market than B. Max Mehl thought this one of the best designs ever.

413 1952 Carver-Washington. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (relatively, considering that the dies for all are in shallow relief).

Surfaces: Mottled and somewhat freckled light brown and gunmetal-blue over lustrous silver surfaces. Far above average (this issue usually comes heavily bagmarked).

Narrative: The Carver-Washington issue features the accolated busts of George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington. As we have emphasized rarity in many instances throughout the present catalogue, and justifiably so, it is a counterpoint that now we point out that the 1952 Carver-Washington, with a reported issuance of 2,006,292 coins, is far and away the most common issue of its design.

Pedigree: Purchased from Frank Duvall, August 26, 1985.

414 1936-D Cincinnati. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp as ever seen (with due note that the portrait details are not sharp on the die).

Surfaces: Satiny lustrous with attractive light heather and golden toning.

Narrative: Unusually fine grade and appearance. Distribution of this issue in 1936 was by local numismatist Thomas G. Melish.

Pedigree: Purchased from Anthony Swiatek, August 19, 1983.

Thomas G. Melish, prominent Cincinnati numismatist, was an entrepreneur and sought to cash in on the commemorative boom after witnessing its origins in 1935. He came up with the innovative idea that a set of coins from three different mints would be ideal to issue in 1936 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Cincinnati as a "musical center of America." This was fine, except that no historian past or present has ever been able to find anything notable that happened on the musical scene in Cincinnati 50 years earlier in 1886.

Melish kept the mintage low at just 5,000 coins from each mint, and posted the highest issue cost so far in the series, \$7.75 for a set of three. Although some of these sets were sold to buyers for \$7.75 each, historians of the commemorative series generally agree that most were held back. The market soon reached the \$50 level, at which point a number of Melish's friends generously made available sets which they were fortunate enough to have purchased earlier. This was just one milestone in Melish's numismatic career. He was also distributor of the 1936 Cleveland half dollar and in 1942 as "chief pirate" (he underwrote the Pirates' Den) was host for the American Numismatic Association's annual convention in Cincinnati.

415 1936 Cleveland. MS-65.

Strike: As sharp as seen (portrait details were never sharp in the die, so sharpness must be judged from other features).

Surfaces: Light gray toning.

Narrative: Issued in the relatively large quantity of 50,000 pieces (two mintages of 25,000 each, one taking place in 1937), this coin was issued for the Cleveland Great Lakes Exposition, but most seem to have been sold to numismatists and speculators, no doubt due at least in part to the fact that the Exposition had closed by the time the second batch of coins was ready.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, August 16, 1983.

Numismatic exploiteur Thomas G. Melish (he of Cincinnati "Musical Center of America" fame; see above) was behind this issue, prompting Lee F. Hewitt, publisher of the *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, to comment: "It seems strange that Mr. Melish, living in Cincinnati [200 miles away], should be the distributor of the Cleveland issue." In actuality, strangeness became the norm in the 1936 commemorative frenzy.

416 1936-S Columbia, SC, Sesquicentennial. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Gorgeous (and even *theoretically* unimprovable) iridescent toning around the periphery.

Narrative: Produced at three mints to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Columbia, South Carolina. Rings on the obverse and reverse set off the inscriptions as labels, and the relatively small central motifs thus appear as cameos.

Pedigree: Purchased from Renrob (Renée and Robert Rose), August 15, 1983.

417 1892 Columbian Exposition. MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant and satiny lustrous with prooflike fields of virtual perfection. Delicate golden toning around the borders.

Narrative: The first United States commemorative half dollar. Issued late in the year and intended for distribution at the World's Columbian Exposition, but such distribution did not occur there until 1893.

One of the nicest we have ever seen of this otherwise plentiful issue.

Pedigree: Purchased from Liberty Coin Co., January 30, 1985.

This coin represents a cooperative effort with Chief Engraver Charles E. Barber designing the obverse and his assistant George T. Morgan doing the reverse. The same duo collaborated on the 1915-S Panama-Pacific half dollar.

418 1893 Columbian. MS-65.

Strike: Average to slightly above average.

Surfaces: Light heather, sea green, and gunmetal-blue toning on the obverse; on the reverse light silver centers give way to gold, then electric blue, then light yellow. A visual treat, and undoubtedly purchased because of its beauty.

Narrative: An omen of the future, the 1893 Columbian half dollar was issued on the 401st anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of America. In later years, there would be many odd anniversaries and dating errors in the series.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, August 16, 1983.



419 1935 Connecticut Tercentenary. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Areas of mottled gray-gold toning, somewhat irregular, over lustrous and frosty surfaces.

Narrative: Depicted is Connecticut's famous Charter Oak, but with oversized leaves, a feature which gave "reviewers" something to discuss at the time.

Pedigree: Ex NASCA, December 1981, Lot 2991. (NASCA = Numismatic and Antiquarian Service Corporation of America.)

420 1936 Delaware Tercentenary. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (but the dies were never sharply detailed on the ship's sails).

Surfaces: Satiny brilliant lustre with champagne toning. Exceptional.

Narrative: The 1936-dated Delaware half dollar was actually struck in 1937 for an anniversary that occurred in 1938.

Pedigree: Purchased from Hy Brown, Inc., August 21, 1985.

421 1936 Elgin Centennial. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: We will not comment in detail on the characteristics of the toning of this coin, but will leave it as a surprise to the in-person bidders and to the eventual buyer. Suffice it to say, it may well have the most beautiful toning in existence on *any* commemorative. Quite a statement, this, but see for yourself.

Narrative: This is one of a number of United States coins which depict the same person on the obverse and reverse. Shown on the reverse is Trygve Rovelstad's *Pioneer* statue, while on the obverse is an enlargement of the head of "The Scout," one of the figures in the group. (Other coins with the same person on both sides in-

clude the 1934-1938 Boone half dollars, 1900 Lafayette dollar [George Washington is on both sides], and the 1959 to date Lincoln cent).

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1985, Lot 3690.

422 1936 Gettysburg. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous with splashes of mottled magenta, somewhat irregular. Never dipped; pristine.

Narrative: The promoters of this issue were in a hurry. The coin is dated 1936, but the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg which it commemorated did not occur until 1938.

Pedigree: Purchased from Park Avenue Coin Center, Inc., February 19, 1982.

423 1922 Grant Memorial. No Star. MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, frosty, and especially lustrous. The fields of this issue are irregular and under magnification *always* show interesting *raised* die lines.

Narrative: Issued to observe the 100th anniversary of the birth of U.S. Grant, this issue is unusual in that it is the only half dollar motif that without significant alteration was also used on a gold dollar.

Pedigree: Purchased from Hy Brown, Inc., August 21, 1985.

Someday Bill Fivaz, J.T. Stanton, or some other observer of minute characteristics should write an article about die lines, which extend across all series and denominations and which, in fact, are as plentiful on modern Lincoln cents as anywhere. We'll publish it in the *Rare Coin Review*.



424 1922 Grant Memorial. With Star. MS-64 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Champagne (Louis Roederer Cristal) toning over remarkably smooth and somewhat prooflike surfaces.

Narrative: Only 4,258 of these were issued, and this in an era when coins were not carefully handled or preserved. In the intervening years many have disappeared or have become damaged. Specimens at the gem level are exceedingly elusive. For many years this was considered to be the most desired of all commemorative issues. Today it is somewhat overlooked, but is rarer than ever.

This is a splendid, indeed memorable, specimen of this famous issue.

Pedigree: Purchased from Andrew Lustig, February 1, 1985.

The star on the obverse was added simply to create a variety and has no historical or other significance. Although the star is recessed on the coin and appears as a counterstamp, it was part of the half dollar die.

Gem Hawaiian 50¢



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

425 1928 Hawaiian Sesquicentennial. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Light gray and heather toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Just 10,008 of this issue were struck, and only 10,000 were distributed (as was also true of the 1935 Hudson and 1935 Old Spanish Trail).

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1986, Lot 3711.

Distribution was through the Bank of Hawaii, which held a small group for many years thereafter and consigned them to one of our auctions (held in 1986). Thus, in a way, the distribution of the 1928 Hawaiian was not completed until 1986 (also see 1936 York).

426 1935 Hudson Sesquicentennial. MS-65.

Strike: Above average (ship's sails not detailed; see 1936 Delaware commentary).

Surfaces: Mottled gray and golden toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Just 10,008 of this issue were struck, and only 10,000 were distributed (as was also true of the 1928 Hawaiian and 1935 Old Spanish Trail). A highly prized key issue in the series.

High-quality Hudson half dollars are fairly rare today, due not only to their low mintage but to their design. The high relief of the ship's sails at the center obverse caused this area to be particularly susceptible to handling marks.

Pedigree: Ex Auction '85, Lot 1833.

The distribution of this coin was handled in a most curious fashion and is detailed in the book, *Commemorative Coins of the United States: A Complete Encyclopedia*. In brief, the institution in Hudson, NY, who contracted to receive the entire issue and sell them to the public for \$1 each, was fearful they would not sell, and wholesaled most of them to an alert coin dealer, who then, in effect, controlled the market. The price soon jumped to the \$4-\$5 level.



427 1924 Huguenot-Walloon Tercentenary. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous. A very early striking from the reverse die, certainly among the first few hundred made, showing tiny *raised* die lines (see commentary under 1922 Grant).

Narrative: A particularly choice specimen of an issue that is not often found with high aesthetic appeal.

Pedigree: Purchased from Greg Holloway, July 28, 1984.

George T. Morgan created this legal tender United States coin on behalf of a church group, thus violating—as the late Walter Breen was fond of saying—the Constitutional separation of church and state. It is said that some unsold pieces were released into circulation, but they must have been withdrawn quickly, for few well-worn ones exist today.

428 1946 Iowa Centennial. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Mottled gray-gold toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: A pleasing specimen of this popular and widely distributed issue.

During the past several years California numismatist Michael Turrini has undertaken and published incredibly exhaustive research on just about every aspect imaginable of the Iowa half dollar, the first commemorative issued after 1939. Much of this has been published in *The Commemorative Trail*, journal for the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins.

429 1946 Iowa Centennial. MS-65.

Strike: Above average but not a match for the preceding.

Surfaces: Delicate golden toning over brilliant, lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Duplicate.

430 1925 Lexington-Concord. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (specialists take note: *including the corner of the bell*).

Surfaces: Lustrous, somewhat prooflike, and with beautiful light iridescent toning.

Narrative: A superb specimen of an otherwise ordinary issue. The aesthetic quality is such that it is easy to imagine that this is the pick from hundreds of coins observed by James Bennett Pryor.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, February 1988, Lot 3549.

This was a very egalitarian issue and saw wide public distribution throughout New England, particularly in the eastern part of Massachusetts. Years later many were spent by those who tired of their novelty.

Citizens of Lexington had their say with the obverse design, while residents of Concord designated the reverse.

431 1925 Lexington-Concord. MS-64 to 65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant and lustrous.

Narrative: Duplicate. Likewise remarkable for its fine strike.

432 1918 Lincoln-Illinois. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous and brilliant with delicate toning.

Narrative: A splendid coin in every respect.

Pedigree: Purchased from Kenneth Murch, February 15, 1985.

The obverse of this issue is by George T. Morgan, who came to America from England in 1876, and who anticipated spending a relatively short time as an engraver at the Mint (he is best remembered today for his "Morgan" silver dollar of 1878). However, he remained for decades, and following the death of Charles E. Barber in 1918, succeeded to the post of chief engraver. Morgan had his own little "business" at the Mint and, among other things, made 1907 gold coin rarities, special Proofs of silver dollars, etc., available to favored dealers (especially Henry Chapman) and collectors.

The reverse is by John Ray Sincock and in the view of many numismatists represents the high water mark of his artistry for a legal tender coin, a motif certainly much more classical than, for example, his 1946 Roosevelt dime or 1948 Franklin half dollar.

433 1918 Lincoln-Illinois. MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant with light golden toning, somewhat mottled on the obverse.

Narrative: Duplicate.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, date not known.

434 1936 Long Island Tercentenary. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (but the dies were never sharply detailed on this issue).

Surfaces: Lustrous and brilliant with areas of light golden toning.

Narrative: A pleasing specimen of one of the more popular issues of the most notable year in commemorative half dollar history.

Pedigree: Ex Steve Ivy, May 1983, Lot 2357.

Struck to observe the 300th anniversary of the first settlement of Europeans on Long Island. Designed by Howard Kenneth Weinman, son of sculptor Adolph A. Weinman (of 1916 "Mercury" dime and Liberty Walking half dollar fame). The Long Island half dollar was widely distributed to the public.

435 1936 Lynchburg. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Lustrous with areas of light gold and brown, somewhat mottled.

Narrative: The Lynchburg half dollar is usually seen in higher grades.

Pedigree: Purchased from Park Avenue Coin Center Inc., February 19, 1982.

This issue is perhaps best known today for bearing the portrait of Senator Carter Glass, who was living at the time and who made a token objection to the use of his portrait, but allowed it anyway. (Other commemoratives showing living people include the 1921 Alabama, 1926 Sesquicentennial, 1936 Robinson-Arkansas, and the new Eunice Shriver coin).

436 1936 Lynchburg Centennial. MS-64.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant with delicate golden toning.

Narrative: Duplicate. Probably bought before the preceding lot, and replaced by it in view of the preceding lot's colorful toning.

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, date not known.



437 1920 Maine Centennial. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces. Certainly one of the very finest in existence anywhere.

Narrative: For many years the 1920 Maine Centennial half dollar was known by commemorative specialists to be one of the hardest to find issues in high Mint State grades. In modern times the penchant for slabbing coins and the increased rapidity of numismatic turnover has made them more available than before, or at least more visibly available.

Pedigree: Purchased from Sterling M. Gambino, August 22, 1985.

There is a mystery concerning this issue. Although Anthony de Francisci, later designer of the 1921 Peace silver dollar, prepared the models for the 1920 Maine half dollar, it is not known who created the original design.

438 1934 Maryland Tercentenary. MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Lustrous with a hint of toning.

Narrative: The Maryland half dollar was released in the year before the commemorative boom ignited. Distribution was orderly with many sold to residents of Maryland and, separately, to the numismatic community.

Pedigree: Purchased from Greg Holloway, August 26, 1987.

The fields of this commemorative are irregular and somewhat "sculptured," not basined in the manner of most coins.

439 1921 Missouri Centennial. MS-64.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Intense iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces, a numismatic kaleidoscope.

Narrative: The design of this issue is by Robert Aitken, who is also remembered for his impressive \$50 gold pieces made for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, among other works. The dies are in fairly high relief, almost sculptured, and the rims are unusually wide.

Pedigree: Ex 1985 ANA, Lot 2284.

A little known fact is that part of the legend is incuse: SEDALIA on the reverse. Sedalia, early capital of Missouri, was in the 1890s the home of the Maple Leaf Club, which inspired Scott Joplin to write the *Maple Leaf Rag*. (Incuse elements appear on a number of other commemoratives including the 2X2 and 2★4 markings on 1921 issues, the D [for Dallin] on the Pilgrim issues, etc.)

Superb 1921 Missouri

Variety With 2★4



440 1921 Missouri Centennial, 2★4. MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Mottled light gold and iridescent toning with areas of silver (the latter primarily on the reverse).

Narrative: Another of the many commemorative coins selected by James Bennett Pryor on the basis of its notable toning.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, February 1988, Lot 3597.

This variety was struck for collectors like the 1921 Alabama 2X2, and only to the extent of 5,000 pieces.

441 1923-S Monroe Doctrine Centennial. MS-64.

Strike: Average to above average (none in existence is truly sharp, to our knowledge).

Surfaces: Brilliant with some marks.

Narrative: A low point in the commemorative series (see footnote).

Pedigree: Purchased from Liberty Coin Co., January 30, 1985.

This is one of the most curious issues in the commemorative half dollar series from the standpoint of logic and artistic quality.

The 100th anniversary of the Monroe Doctrine was seized upon as the reason for issuing this half dollar, although few Americans anywhere observed the anniversary or cared about it. The coins were sold in connection with a motion picture festival held in Los Angeles in June 1923, which had no connection with the coin's commemorative intent, although the inscription LOS ANGELES appears on the reverse.

The coin designs were executed by Chester Beach, a well-known sculptor with excellent credentials, but in this instance the result was very unsatisfactory. Although art is in the eye of the beholder, most observers consider the design to be uninspired. The details were shallow, bas relief in concept, and on a coin appeared dull and flat. The coins were struck on high-speed presses, and after coinage were mixed in bags.

The result was a coin that was unattractive (opinion here) at the outset, for which most specimens are lightly struck and bagmarked. One cannot have peaks without valleys, and perhaps the 1923-S Monroe Doctrine Centennial half dollar is the low artistic point in the series and provides a contrast and basis for appreciation of other issues (the highly acclaimed Oregon Trail, for example).

Unsold specimens were placed into circulation in California, where they were seen on occasion through the 1930s and 1940s (our relative by marriage, the late Fred C. Woodson, of the Bank of America, used to pluck these from change as he found them; years later, some of these were acquired by us).



442 1938 New Rochelle. MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, prooflike. Possible presentation coin.

Narrative: If you don't have any commemoratives in your collection, don't buy this one—as it will spoil you with its quality!

Pedigree: Purchased from Park Avenue Coin Center, Inc., February 19, 1982.

The New Rochelle half dollar was a very late entry in the commemorative sweepstakes of the 1930s and is, in fact, the last design of the decade, indeed, the last design until the 1946 Iowa Centennial half dollar.

This commemorative was created by collectors for collectors and perhaps serves as a model as to what can happen when a coin is produced and released with good intentions. The Westchester County Coin Club, New Rochelle, NY, was in charge of the project, with Julius Gutttag (of the Gutttag Brothers coin dealership) as the guiding light. Gertrude K. Lathrop, who designed the 1936 Albany half dollar, prepared the models.

A reasonable issue price, \$2, was set, news releases and advertisements were not misleading, and the entire distribution was handled in a first class manner.

443 1936 Norfolk Bicentennial. MS-67.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate iridescent toning over silver surfaces. Unimprovable!

Narrative: Anyone who enjoyed Robert Ripley's "Believe It or Not" column and read about people who wrote the Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice might like to own a Norfolk commemorative half dollar. The coin is as cluttered with lettering as can be, contains inscriptions both in English and in Latin, and, for good measure, has five different dates!

Pedigree: Purchased from Renrob, August 15, 1983.

444 1926-S Oregon Trail. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty.

Narrative: A few years ago the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins took a poll asking its members their favorite design, and the Oregon Trail Memorial was the winner.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1985, Lot 3800.

The Oregon Trail series began with good intentions (presumably) in 1926, but deteriorated into an exploitative issue and bounced around from one distributor to another (including the illustrious Wavie Raymond) until it finally quit in 1939. Now all of this is forgiven—actually, it wasn't much of a controversy at the time—in light of its being a beautiful design prepared by the collaboration of a famous husband-and-wife team, James Earle Fraser and Laura Gardin Fraser.

445 1937-D Oregon Trail. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty.

Narrative: From the standpoint of distribution—12,000—this was the most popular Oregon Trail issue after 1926.

Pedigree: Purchased from John Dannreuther, August 19, 1985.

446 1938 Oregon Trail. PDS set. MS-65 to 66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate golden toning over lustrous, frosty surfaces.

Narrative: Only 6,000 of these sets were distributed. Somewhat scarce today, but not in the rarity class as nearly all were sold into the numismatic market and preserved. (Total: 3 pieces)

Seldom seen in this quality.

Pedigree: Ex Bowers & Merena, January 1986, Lot 619.



447 1915-S Panama-Pacific. MS-66 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Lilac, gray, and gunmetal-blue toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Struck at the San Francisco Mint for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and distributed at the fair by Farran Zerbe, numismatic showman. At one time the Mint proposed striking commemorative coins on the Exposition grounds, but the idea proved unfeasible.

Pedigree: Ex Stack's, October 1985, Lot 82.

Standing goddesses with flowing gowns were popular on coinage of the era, inspired by "The Sower" found on French coins. In the American series this motif found use in Saint-Gaudens' 1907 \$20, a proposed but unadopted motif by Victor D. Brenner for the 1909 cent, and, later, Adolph A. Weinman's Liberty Walking half dollar of 1916. The 1915-S Panama-Pacific half dollar is Charles E. Barber's effort in that direction.

448 1920 Pilgrim. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty. An early impression of the dies with some interesting *raised* die lines visible under magnification.

Narrative: This was a fairly popular issue in its time, although the entire mintage didn't sell. This backlog of 1920 coins on hand did not prevent the promoters from issuing another variety the next year (see below).

Pedigree: Purchased from Numismatic Associates of New England, August 16, 1983.

449 1921 Pilgrim. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Pale gold and iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: See above. With irrelevant (commemoration-wise) date 1921 added in the field to create a variety for collectors.

Pedigree: Purchased at the National Silver Dollar Convention, St. Louis, November 13, 1986.

450 1936 Rhode Island Tercentenary. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (considering the relief of the dies).

Surfaces: Attractive golden and iridescent toning around the peripheries.

Narrative: An exceptional specimen of a common issue.

Pedigree: Purchased from Renrob, August 15, 1983.

A few years ago several hundred of these sets came on the market from a quantity purchased in the late 1930s by Amon G. Carter, Sr. (co-founder of American Airlines, and a gentleman whose interest in numismatics began when B. Max Mehl gave him as a gift a quarter eagle of his birth date, 1879). These are now widely dispersed.

This issue is one of several commemoratives with the peripheral inscriptions set off as "labels" by inner rings. This nicely frames the center images.

Well-known Rhode Island professional numismatist Horace M. Grant had his fingers in this commemorative pie, and his experiences make interesting historical reading today.

451 1937 Roanoke. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, frosty.

Narrative: This issue usually comes very well struck and quite beautiful.

Pedigree: Ex Kagin's January 1979, Lot 862.

The portrait on the obverse is said to have been inspired by movie actor Errol Flynn. The mystery of the lost colony of Roanoke and the cryptic CROATAN inscription is one of the most enduring in American history.

452 1936 Robinson-Arkansas. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate golden toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: A truly exceptional specimen of an issue that is plentiful in "ordinary" grades, but which is very elusive with the aesthetic quality of the piece offered here.

Pedigree: Purchased from Renrob, February 18, 1982.

Which side is the obverse of this coin? Take your pick, as no one knows for sure. According to coinage law, the reverse is the side with the portrait of Senator Joseph Robinson, while the obverse is the eagle side. But, if the law says a cow is a horse, does that make it one? (to paraphrase one of Abraham Lincoln's observations).

453 1935-S San Diego. MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Light gray and iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Attractive in every respect.

Pedigree: Purchased from Park Avenue Coin Center, Inc., February 19, 1982.

This popular issue is always in demand. A number of them remained in hoards—and, for all we know, may still remain—until recent years, when several thousand came on the market. For this reason the 1935-S is much less expensive today than it would otherwise be. In time it will become very widely dispersed and the price structure will change.

454 1936-D San Diego. MS-66.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Intense medium iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Same comment as 1935-S, but fewer are around today.

PCGS Population:

Pedigree: Purchased from Delaware Valley Coin, August 15, 1983.

Gem 1926 Sesquicentennial



(photo enlarged to twice actual size)

455 1926 Sesquicentennial. MS-65.

Strike: Far above average (which is not saying much).**Surfaces:** Lustrous with delicate toning.

Narrative: This half dollar gives the 1923-S Monroe (see Lot 441) close competition in the cellar of the aesthetic category. Like the Monroe, the Sesquicentennial is in low relief and flatly detailed. However, unlike the Monroe and many other commemorative half dollars, it observed a truly significant anniversary, the 150th year of American independence.

The Pryor Collection coin is one of the nicest we have seen.

Pedigree: Purchased from Rare Coin Investments of Ramsey, January 30, 1986.



456 1935 Old Spanish Trail. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Mottled gold-gray toning around border areas set against silver surfaces.

Narrative: A particularly nice specimen of one of the most desired designs—and one of the rarest—in the commemorative series.

Pedigree: Ex Steve Ivy, May 1983, Lot 2420.

Just 10,008 of this issue were struck, and only 10,000 were distributed (as was also true of the 1935 Hudson and 1928 Hawaiian).

The Old Spanish Trail, or simply Spanish Trail as it is now usually called, was the brainchild of L.W. Hoffecker, who later served as president of the American Numismatic As-

sociation. It was a highly exploitative issue probably made primarily for personal enrichment, although ostensibly it was intended to benefit a museum in El Paso (the writer's inquiries directed in recent years to museum authorities in El Paso remain unanswered).

Regardless of the original intent or ethics of distribution, coins of all kinds stand on their own as numismatic collectibles, and sometimes stories of "pirates" add to the aura of a coin. Today the 1935 Old Spanish Trail is one of the "big three" commemorative types, due to its low mintage. Of these three, this variety is the one usually found in better grades.

457 1925 Stone Mountain. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate gold, champagne, and rose toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Who knows if this is the most beautiful Stone Mountain half dollar in existence, but we've never seen a nicer one.

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, January 1985, Lot 3865.

Perhaps when Michael Turrini finishes with his study of the 1946 Iowa half dollar (see Lot 429) he will turn his attention to researching the 1925 Stone Mountain. We suspect that a veritable mountain of paper items, clippings, etc., awaits the interested scholar.

458 1935 Texas Centennial. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate gold and iridescent toning over lustrous surface.

Narrative: The present specimen is an aesthetic treat.

Pedigree: Ex NASCA December 1981, Lot 3032.

Texas celebrated the 100th anniversary of its statehood in 1936, but it began taking in profits early with a 1934-dated coinage, kept up the pace with too-early 1935 coins (such as this one), and continued dragging out the anniversary until 1938.

459 1936 Texas Centennial. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: A whisper of champagne toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: One of 8,900 distributed. Over the years, in up markets as well as downtrends, the 1934-1938 Texas coins have always been popular. This 1936 is a true *centennial* coin.

Pedigree: Purchased from Estate Coins, February 1, 1985.



460 1925 Vancouver. MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Lustrous, brilliant surfaces with areas of delicate gold. Splendid!

Narrative: This attractive half dollar was struck at the San Francisco Mint, but lacks a mintmark. (The striking of mintmarkless coins at this facility occurred at other times as well including the 1883 Hawaiian silver coinage, certain Lincoln Memorial reverse Lincoln cents, and, most recently, the error 1990-"S" Proof cent absent the S).

Pedigree: Purchased from Greg Holloway, July 28, 1984.

461 1927 Vermont. MS-65 (PCGS).

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Delicate blue-gray and iridescent toning over frosty surfaces.

Narrative: This issue was struck in the highest relief and with the most sculptured appearance of any commemorative half dollar.

The present specimen is one of the most beautiful in existence.

Pedigree: Purchased from Anthony Swiatek, February 22, 1985.

462 1946 Booker T. Washington PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp (and rare so).

Surfaces: Golden and magenta toning over lustrous surfaces. Relatively free of the usual marks.

Narrative: The Booker T. Washington series began in 1946 and extended through 1951. Interest was greatest in 1946, but dropped sharply after that point. Probably 95% of the extant specimens are lightly struck, heavily bagmarked, or both.

The rarity of *true MS-65* (or whatever higher grades you wish to use) has not been appreciated, as the certification services have adjusted their standards to permit lots of bagmarks on coins certified at these levels. (Total: 3 pieces)

463 1947 Booker T. Washington PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, frosty, and *far above average*.

Narrative: A beautiful set. Scarce, too! (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: Purchased August 19, 1983 at the ANA Convention.

This 1947 set of three coins is quite scarce today, despite published distribution figures of 100,000 of each variety. There are a lot of mysteries surrounding the actual numbers minted vs. the numbers distributed of the entire Booker T. Washington series and its companion Carver-Washington series. Steps toward unraveling the enigma have been taken by Q. David Bowers in *Commemorative Coins of the United States: A Complete Encyclopedia*, and by commentaries in *The Commemorative Trail*, but much remains to be learned.

464 1948 Booker T. Washington PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty. Mark on cheek on "D" coin.

Narrative: See preceding. Low mintage of 8,005 sets. Where are they all today? (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: Ex Superior Galleries, February 1985, Lot 1628.

465 1949 Booker T. Washington PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Above average.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty. Hint of golden toning.

Narrative: Low mintage figure of just 6,004 sets (the odd four coins being reserved for the Assay Commission) in this year and 1950; lowest in the series. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: Purchased from Mid-Continent Coins, August 21, 1985.

466 1950 Booker T. Washington PDS set. MS-65.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty.

Narrative: Low mintage figure of just 6,004 sets (the odd four coins being reserved for the Assay Commission) in 1949 and this year; lowest in the series. (Total: 3 pieces)

Pedigree: Purchased from Leon Hendrickson, February 5, 1988.

467 1936 Wisconsin Territorial Centennial. MS-65.

Strike: Above average (the dies were not sharply detailed to begin with).

Surfaces: Blue, magenta, and iridescent toning over lustrous surfaces.

Narrative: Issued to observe the 100th anniversary of the Territory of Wisconsin (which is different from the centennial of statehood).

Pedigree: Purchased from Park Avenue Coin Center, Inc., February 19, 1982.

468 1936 York Tercentenary. MS-66.

Strike: Sharp.

Surfaces: Brilliant, lustrous, and frosty.

Narrative: Gorgeous.

Pedigree: Ex Kagin's January 1979, Lot 887.

Distribution was under the supervision of numismatist Walter Nichols, whose estate included a small quantity of these half dollars and was consigned to one of our auctions (held in 1984). Thus, in a way, the distribution of the 1936 York was not completed until 1984 (also see 1928 Hawaiian).

BALANCE OF COLLECTION, VARIOUS.

469 **Half dollars** including these Kennedy halves averaging MS-64: ☆ 1964 Kennedy (2) ☆ 1965 ☆ 1966 ☆ 1967 ☆ 1968-D ☆ 1972-D ☆ PLUS: Trade Dollar: ☆ 1877-S F-12 ☆ 1952 Carver-Washington. MS-63. ☆ 1925 Lexington-Concord. MS-64 (2). Each is of above average quality. ☆ 1918 Lincoln-Illinois. MS-63. ☆ 1926-S Oregon Trail. MS-63. ☆ 1925 Stone Mountain. MS-64. (Total: 14 pieces).

END OF SALE

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Over the years, half dollars have formed the focus for study for many scholars. Notable among these are Capt. J.W. Haseltine, who published his *Type Table*, or list of die varieties, in 1881, and, especially, M.L. Beistle, a Shippensburg, PA, manufacturer of cardboard boxes and coin albums (his contribution as a pioneer maker of coin albums has been generally overlooked by the hobby), who in 1929 came forth with his *magnum opus*, a fine study of half dollars titled *Register of United States Half Dollar Die Varieties and Sub-Varieties*. Both the Haseltine and Beistle works have been rendered obsolete by later studies, but are important as historical items.

American Numismatic Society. *America's Silver Coins, 1794-1891*. New York: ANS, 1987. Contains several articles by today's numismatic scholars and researchers including "Edge and Die Sequences on Early Half Dollars," by Donald Gunnet and Ivan Leaman; "Seated Liberty Half Dollars," by Randall Wiley and William Bugert; and "The Third Die: A Different Look," by Russell Logan. Part of the highly-acclaimed annual ANS Coinage of the Americas Conference (COAC) series.

Beistle, Martin L. *A Register of Half Dollar Die Varieties and Subvarieties*. Shippensburg, PA: the author, 1929. An important reference for the half dollar denomination. For years this work provided a basis for all later studies. Less well known is the fact that Beistle produced the first popular coin albums—consisting of cardboard pages with celluloid slides—distributed by Wayte Raymond.

Boosel, Harry X. *1873-1873*. Chicago: Hewitt Bros., 1960. The author had a passion for the coinage of 1873 and undertook a detailed study which, to this day, provides most of our knowledge regarding the extensive coinage produced during those twelve months.

Bowers, Q. David. *Commemorative Coins of the United States, A Complete Encyclopedia*. Wolfeboro, NH: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1991. Included is the historical background of each issue, a market history, and a summary of characteristics.

Bowers, Q. David. *The History of United States Coinage as Illustrated by the Garrett Collection*. Written for The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Los Angeles, CA: Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, 1979. With an eye to quality the Garrett family carefully assembled one of the finest cabinets ever.

Breen, Walter H. *Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins*. New York: Doubleday, 1988. Without this reference, the coin collector is not a numismatist. A compilation of many years of research by the author who in his time was the pre-eminent figure in numismatic study.

Carothers, Neil. *Fractional Currency*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1930. A history of the fractional coinage, through the half dollar, is presented. Chapters include the origins of subsidiary coinage, the colo-

nial period, the beginnings of the United States coinage system, and reviews of the various coinage periods. An indispensable tool for the numismatist.

Commemorative Trail, The. Helen Carmody, editor. Journal of the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins. News and research items covering past and present eras in the field. Essential and enjoyable reading for the enthusiast and specialist.

Fox, Bruce. *The Complete Guide to Walking Liberty Half Dollars*. Virginia Beach, VA: DLRC Press, 1993. Detailed analysis of the series including history, patterns, counterfeits, and a discussion by date and mintmark. Also included are additional collector notes including market commentary. A must for the serious Liberty Walking half dollar enthusiast.

Haseltine, John W. *Type Table of United States Dollars, Half Dollars, and Quarters*. Philadelphia: the author, 1881. Primarily a record of Haseltine's collection, the *Type Table* laid the groundwork for all future reference work covering the three denominations discussed. Apparently ghost written to a large extent by J. Colvin Randall.

Herrman, Stephen J. *Auction & Mail Bid Prices Realized for R. 4 to R. 8 Bust Half Dollars 1794-1836*. Denver, CO. Published twice annually by the author. A tool for rarity and market values of the early half dollars, this reference is indispensable to the serious collector.

Hilt, Robert P., II. *Die Varieties of Early United States Coins*. Omaha, NE: RTS Publishing Company, 1980. The author presents the early coinage through his die group theory of coinage. Hilt explains that this is a bridge between die variety listings, such as Beistle's work, and written histories, such as that by Taxay. An interesting approach to the study of early coinage containing many valuable insights.

John Reich Collectors Society. *John Reich Journal*. The official publication of the society; issued approximately three times per year. Articles include valuable information encouraging the study of numismatics and relating to early United States gold and silver coinage. Membership is *de rigueur* for anyone interested in this coinage era. For membership information contact Keith G. Bellman, P.O. Box 135, Harrison, OH 45030-0135.

Julian, R.W. Various articles covering the history of early United States coinage and other numismatic topics. Julian's research efforts and writing style are virtually unparalleled today. The serious student should strive for a complete collection of these articles. Unfortunately, his articles appear in a wide range of publications and no single volume of his collected works exists. A few articles of interest to the collector of half dollars are (listed in order of date of publication): "The Mint Investigation of 1795." *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine (NSM)*, July 1961. "First Silver Coinage: 1794." *NSM*, February 1963. "1795 Silver Coinage—Half Dollars." *NSM*, September 1963. "1796 Silver Coinage." *NSM*, September 1965. "Silver Coinage of 1797." *NSM*, April 1968. "Early Silver Coinage of the United States." *Coins Magazine*, June 1972. "Silver Coinage of 1803-

1804, Part I. *NSM*, April 1973. "Silver Coinage of 1803-1804, Part II. *NSM*, May 1973. "Silver Coinage of 1807. *NSM*, April 1974. "Silver Coinage of 1801. *Coin World*, October 11, 1978. "Silver Coinage of 1802. *Coin World*, May 14, 1980 "New Orleans Silver Coinage, 1838-1839." *Numismatic News*, May 27, 1980. "Seated Liberty Half Dollars." *Coins Magazine*, December 1988.

Lawrence, David. *The Complete Guide to Barber Half Dollars*. Virginia Beach, VA: DLRC Press, 1991. A study of the Barber series from 1892 to 1915, presenting a history of the series, details of each issue, market information, and notes on counterfeits. The first extensive report on this coinage and a must for the serious collector.

Liberty Seated Collectors Club. *The Gobrecht Journal*. The official publication of the club, issued three times yearly. Each issue includes well researched articles covering all aspects of Liberty Seated coinage from half dimes through dollars, including trade dollars. Membership is an absolute must for anyone interested in our Liberty Seated coinage. James Bennett Pryor was a charter member of LSCC, and over the years he was mentioned frequently in the *Journal*. \$15 annual dues. For membership information contact Scott Grieb, P.O. Box 776, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0776.

Overton, Al C. *Early Half Dollar Die Varieties, 1794-1836*. Colorado Springs, CO: Published by the author, 1967. The first extensive study of die varieties for the early years since M.L. Beistle's effort. Overton extensively studied the varieties of this coinage and accumulated an important reference collection along the way.

Parsley, Don, editor. *Early Half Dollar Die Varieties, 1794-1836*. Third Edition. Escondido, CA: the editor, 1990. Parsley, Al C. Overton's son-in-law, expanded Overton's earlier reference with improved photography, new varieties, updated rarity ratings, and additional text including an initial attempt at a condition census.

Smith, Pete. *American Numismatic Biographies*. Minneapolis, MN: Remy Bourne, Ramm Communications, 1992. A marvelous work deserving of wide distribution, but rather limited in its print run.

Souders, Edgar. *Bust Half Fever*. Rocky River, OH: Money Tree Press, 1995. This delightful volume adds a personal and collecting dimension to the technical descriptions in the Overton and Parsley references. The history of the early coinage is reviewed along with notes of collector interest.

Swiatek, Anthony and Walter H. Breen. *Encyclopedia of United States Gold and Silver Commemorative Coins, 1892-1954*. New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1981. An important presentation of the classic commemorative series discussing each issue, varieties, and counterfeit information.

Taxay, Don. *An Illustrated History of U.S. Commemorative Coinage*. New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1967. The author located much original material from the Commission of Fine Arts, along with original correspondence and sketches. All of this was compiled into an easy-reading survey of the entire commemorative series.

Taxay, Don. *The U.S. Mint and Coinage*. New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1966. The complete history of our nation's coinage from the beginnings in the 18th century to the modern era. Early proposals and legislation, establishment of the first mint, and an important report on the method of coinage manufacture are all included. Arguably the most important tome ever written from the perspective of events transpiring within the walls of the Mint. Walter Breen, who assisted with much of the research, stated this book to be "beyond doubt Taxay's masterpiece."

Wiley, Randy and Bill Bugert. *The Complete Guide to Liberty Seated Half Dollars*. Virginia Beach, VA: DLRC Press, 1993. Illustrated analysis of each date and mintmark issue including major varieties, history, rarity and pricing information, and discussions of errors and counterfeits. A must for the serious numismatist.

PEDIGREE CITATIONS

Individuals and Firms

The following individuals and firms are among those who provided coins to James Bennett Pryor, who are cited in pedigree listings in the present catalogue, or were associated prominently with certain of his rarities. While many listings pertain to entities no longer active in the hobby, many are current and have been updated with modern information.

Allied Coin Investments, Inc. Gary Adkins. Minnesota.

American Auction Association: Auction affiliate of Bowers and Ruddy Galleries (see listing).

April, Harold: Active in the mid-1960s.

Apte, Donald: Coin dealer, active today, from Vienna, VA. A popular figure at rare coin conventions.

Atwater, William Cutler: (1861-1940) Collector and businessman from New York. His extensive collection including an 1838-O half dollar was sold by B. Max Mehl on June 11, 1946.

B & J Coins. Joe Mileham. Springfield, IL.

Bangs & Co.: New York City auction house from 1853 to 1900. Their coin sales were catalogued by professional numismatists, some well known, others not. The firm also provided its auction facilities to other coin auction companies.

Bebee, Aubrey and Adeline: (Aubrey life dates: 1906-1992) Traded as Bebee's. Collector and dealer from Omaha, NE. Mr. and Mrs. Bebee opened their first coin shop in Chicago in 1941. In 1952 they moved their business to Omaha. Aubrey was a founding member of the Professional Numismatists Guild and held membership number 1. The Bebees made several important donations to the ANA Museum including the J.V. McDermott 1913 Liberty Head nickel (purchased in 1966) and an 1804 silver dollar.

Berg, David: Dealer from Wexford, PA. Especially active in the 1970s and 1980s. Primarily a wholesale dealer, Berg was a recognized expert in the field of pattern coinage. David and his wife, Karen, reside just outside Pittsburgh where, today, he is the proprietor of a classic used car dealership.

Bowers & Merena Galleries, Inc.: Wolfeboro, NH, rare coin, auction, and publishing firm under the direction of Q. David Bowers and Raymond N. Merena. Numismatic staff in 1995 also includes Dr. Richard A. Bagg (auction director), Mark R. Borckardt (senior numismatist), Andrew W. Pollock III (author and researcher), Frank Van Valen (writer, scholar), Gail Watson (direct sales), Beth Piper (auction), Douglas Plasencia (photographer), and many others. Auction affiliate: Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc.

Bowers & Ruddy Galleries, Inc.: Rare coin and auction firm based in Los Angeles, under the direction of Q. David Bowers and James F. Ruddy. 1971-1982. The first 11 auction sales were under the name American Auction Association. For several years the firm was a subsidiary of General Mills. Succeeded by Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc., Wolfeboro, NH.

Brigandi, Donald: Professional numismatist from New York City.

Brown, Hy: Professional numismatist; proprietor of Hy Brown, Inc., of Painesville, OH.

Brownlee, Mike: Dallas, TX, long-time professional numismatist active today, specializing in gold coinage, rarities, and other properties. Associate of numismatist and researcher Harry Bass.

Champa, Armand: Active coin and literature collector. Active in the roller skating business, at one time Armand owned nine rinks in KY. His fabulous collection of pattern coinage was sold by American Auction Association (a division of Bowers and Ruddy Galleries) in 1972 and his incomparable collection of numismatic literature was catalogued by Charles Davis and sold by Bowers and Merena in a series of four sales during 1994 and 1995.

Chapman brothers: Samuel Hudson and Henry Chapman were employed briefly by John Haseltine prior to forming their own partnership in 1878. In business together in Philadelphia, PA, until 1906, the brothers conducted 83 auction sales. In 1906 the Chapmans parted company, each forming their own rare coin auction company. Henry Chapman continued in business until 1932, conducting another 51 auction sales and a very active retail business, while Samuel Hudson Chapman held 28 additional sales until 1924 and conducted a limited retail business.

Coen-Messer: New York City partnership of Joel D. Coen and Dan Messer. Dan Messer passed away several years ago. Joel Coen remained in the business and was joined with Steve Blum.

Cohen, Jerome L.: (1920-1990) Active as a coin dealer from 1949 onward. Jerry Cohen established the Old Pueblo Coin Shop in Tucson, AZ, in 1955. He joined with Abner Kreisberg in 1959 and remained a partner until 1984. Cohen and Kreisberg, located on North Beverly Drive in Beverly Hills, CA, conducted auctions under the name Quality Sales Corporation and retail sales as Coin Gallery. Later, in Beverly Hills, Jerry operated the Jerry Cohen Corporation.

Columbia Coin Company: Operated by Glenn Y. Davidson, Houston, TX.

Continental Coin Galleries: St. Paul, MN, firm handling United States and world coinage. At one time the firm purchased an 1804 silver dollar from Bowers and Ruddy Galleries.

Dannreuther, John: Proprietor of JDRC of Memphis, TN. The firm specializes in choice and rare United States coinage.

- Delaware Valley Coin and Stamp Co.: The business of Frank Greenberg in the Delaware Valley of eastern Pennsylvania. Delaware Valley Coin was a frequent early advertiser in the *Gobrecht Journal*, originally under the name Bazaar Coin Shop. Today the firm operates under the banner Delaware Valley Rare Coin Company.
- Devore, Don: Long-time professional numismatist from Columbus, OH. Don and his son Dale are active today.
- Downey, Sheridan, III: Oakland, CA, professional numismatist specializing in early half dollars. In the 1990s he bought and sold the Al C. Overton reference collection of the denomination as well as the Robinson S. Brown, Jr., collection of early half dollars.
- Durst, Sanford J.: Coin dealer, book publisher, and attorney from New York.
- DuVall, Frank: Coin dealer from Huntsville, AL. Active in commemorative coinage. Founder of the Society for United States Commemorative Coins (SUSCC).
- Elder, Thomas L.: (1874-1948) Dealer from Buffalo, NY, later located in Pittsburgh, PA, and for a long time in New York City, who conducted 294 auction sales during his career. He claimed to be able to catalog 1,000 auction lots in 24 hours. Anyone reading his catalogs today may understand how this was possible(!). Elder is remembered for his acerbic wit, his no-holds-barred comments about his competitors and about his clients who did not pay their bills on time, for his involvement in American political commentary including the issuance of numerous private medals, and for his major-league fight with Farran Zerbe (numismatic showman and one-time president of the ANA).
- Emmer, Robert. Dealer operating Penn State Galleries, Inc., of Los Angeles, CA. Later relocated.
- Empire Coin Co., Inc.: The original Bowers and Ruddy, this partnership of Q. David Bowers and James F. Ruddy combined the talents of two young professional numismatists on April 15, 1958, to form one of the most successful coin businesses of the late 1950s and 1960s.
- Estate Coins: Believed to be the Cleveland, OH, firm with this name.
- Farley, Floyd: Collector from Arizona who specialized in early half dollars, especially those of the Capped Bust type 1807-1836.
- Flynn, Joe, Jr.: Proprietor, with his father, of the Kansas City, KS, firm that bears the Flynn name. Joe Flynn, Jr., is a past president of the Professional Numismatists Guild.
- Fox, J. & D.: No information located.
- Gambino, Sterling M.: Coin dealer. Proprietor of Sterling M. Gambino Rare Coins of White Plains, NY.
- Gem Coins: Raymond A. Ball, Fort Wayne, IN.
- Green, Col. Edward Howland Robinson: (1868-1936) Wealthy heir, collector, and businessman, the son of Hetty Green, "The Witch of Wall Street." Director of the Texas Midland and other railroads. He owned seven of the known 1838-O half dollars and all five 1913 Liberty Head nickels along with other numismatic treasures. He also owned the original sheet of 100 1918 "Jenny" inverted 24¢ airmail stamps.
- Gross, Richard. Baltimore, MD.
- Hall's Coins. Probably Bill Hall from San Francisco, who was well known for his quality coins.
- Halperin, James: Principal of New England Rare Coin Auctions from 1975 to 1982. Currently in partnership with Steve Ivy at Heritage Rare Coin Galleries of Dallas, TX. Author of a book on grading and at one time the proprietor of a grading service. Has handled many rarities.
- Hawn, Reed: Numismatist from Texas who has formed several notable collections over the years. Stack's sold one of his collections in 1977 and another in 1993.
- Hendrickson, Leon: Professional numismatist since 1949. Proprietor of SilverTowne of Winchester, IN. Past president of Central States Numismatic Society, Professional Numismatists Guild, and National Silver Dollar Roundtable. Mark Borckardt, co-author of the present catalog, recalls the enjoyable experience of visiting Leon at SilverTowne in the early 1970s.
- Heritage: In 1983 James Halperin and Steve Ivy opened Heritage Rare Coin Galleries and Heritage Numismatic Auctions. Today, the Heritage companies of Dallas, TX, are well known in the hobby.
- Hinderling, Wade: Long-time professional numismatist in New York.
- Hipps, Ed: Dallas, TX, dealer, formerly from Pennsylvania. Ed has been an active participant in buying and selling choice early coinage.
- Hollinbeck-Kagin. See Kagin's.
- Holloway, Greg: Director of Continental Investment Group, Inc.
- Imperial Coin Co.: Benjamin Stack, a former partner in the Stack's firm, separated from them and operated his own company in the mid-1950s in New York, then Las Vegas, NV.
- Ivy, Steve: Coin dealer since 1961. Operated Steve Ivy Numismatic Auctions from 1972 to 1983. Currently a partner in Heritage Rare Coin Galleries and other Heritage companies in Dallas, TX, with James Halperin.
- Johnson, Robert: Long-time San Francisco, CA, professional numismatist and past president of the Professional Numismatists Guild. Presently with Ron Gillio he is a consultant for Butterfield & Butterfield Auctions.
- Kagin's: The Kagin family has had a long, illustrious career in numismatics. Art Kagin was hired by the Hollinbeck Stamp Company in 1935 and opened a coin operation in Des Moines, Iowa. Art's younger brother Paul, joined the firm in 1940, and Art's son Donald joined the firm in 1972. The firm was named Hollinbeck Stamp and Coin Company through 1958, Hollinbeck-Kagin from 1958 to 1973, and Kagin's beginning in 1973.
- Kaplan, Max: New York City dealer active in the 1950s and 1960s. An early director of the Professional Numismatists Guild.
- Kelman & Associates. Keith Kelman. Coin dealer with offices in New York, Chicago, and La Jolla, CA.
- Kleinman, I.: Long-time New York City rare coin dealer.
- Kliman, Mike: Professional numismatist and author. Son-in-law of Abe Kosoff. In partnership with Stephen Kosoff (died 1969) he operated Numismatic Enterprises.
- Knight, Lyn F.: Kansas City dealer specializing primarily in currency, but with sales in other areas as well.
- Kosoff, Abe: (1912-1983) Professional numismatist since 1937, but active in coin collecting since 1929. Kosoff operated Numismatic Gallery in New York since 1940 and opened a Beverly Hills branch in 1948. He was in partnership with Abner Kreisberg until 1954. Kosoff was the founder of the Professional Numismatists Guild, a recipient of the Farran Zerbe Award, and was elected to the ANA Numismatic Hall of Fame in 1982. Handled many important collections and rarities. His numismatic estate was auctioned by Bowers and Merena.
- Kreisberg, Abner: Partner with Abe Kosoff (in the Numismatic Gallery), Hans M.F. Schulman (in shared auction arrangements), and Jerry Cohen (in Coin Gallery and Quality Sales) over a period of years. Kreisberg conducted 39 auction sales, most recently under the name Quality Sales.

Corporation. Has handled many important collections and rarities, especially under the Numismatic Gallery banner. In recent years Abner has kept his hat in the numismatic ring and has bought and sold many items.

Lee, Edward: President of Lee Numismatics International, Inc., of Wellesley, MA. Currently Lee Certified Coins, Ltd., of NH.

Lee, Kenneth: Long-time professional numismatist from Glendale, CA. An early Professional Numismatists Guild member and a well known author and specialist in California fractional gold.

Leidman, Julian: Collector and professional numismatist from Silver Springs, MD. Director of the Professional Numismatists Guild from 1975 to 1987. Specialist in patterns and early United States coinage. Has handled many important rarities. Numismatic consultant.

Liberty Coin Co.: Several firms have used this name over the years including companies in Michigan, Virginia, and California. The identity of the Liberty Coin Co. supplying coins to the Pryor Collection is not known.

Lohr, Maj. Lenox R.: (1891-1968) Collector and businessman. President of the Columbia Broadcasting System and head of the Field Museum, Chicago. His unprecedented collection of approximately 1,500 patterns was sold to Abner Kreisberg, who sold it to Empire Coin Company in 1961 and was marketed on a direct sales basis by Q. David Bowers and James F. Ruddy.

Lustig, Andrew: Coin dealer active in New York. His specialties include pattern coins, territorial gold, and rarities.

Manfra, Tordella & Brookes: A.k.a. MTB. This New York City firm has handled many of the leading United States and world rarities, although it is perhaps best known for its business in precious metals and bullion. Most famous among the rarities is the Norweb gem specimen of the 1861 Philadelphia Mint Paquet reverse double eagle which was later sold to Spectrum Numismatics.

Mayflower Coin Auctions: Boston rare coin auction firm established in 1956. The firm was under the direction of president Manuel ("Mel") Lipson and cataloguer Maurice M. Gould. Many sales were held at the venerable Parker House hotel.

McDermott, J.V. Well-known dealer (life dates: c.1898-1966) who for many years was the leading advertiser in the *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*. A disabled veteran, he attended many coin shows and was a well-known and well-liked personality. He had one of the five known 1913 Liberty Head nickels and was fond of keeping it *loose among his pocket change*, fishing it out and showing it to others sitting with him at a bar (where he could usually be found during the off-hours at a convention). Finally, he was persuaded to put it in a plastic holder, which he did (a small green holder secured with screws on the corners). From time to time he would write about the offers he received for "his nickel" as part of the introduction to his advertisements in the *Scrapbook*, with Tennessee banker P.B. Trotter being a particularly ardent seeker of his famous coin.

Mehl, B. Max: (1884-1957) Coin dealer from Fort Worth, TX. His first advertisement was carried in the *Numismatist* in the December 1903 issue. Mehl was a promoter of coins and arguably did more to advance the hobby than any other individual of his time. His fame endures today, and there is a contingent of numismatic bibliophiles who collect Mehl-iana. During his career, Mehl handled most, if not all, of the classic rarities including eight different transactions involving the 1804 dollar, the Dunham 1822 half eagle, and other landmarks. In 1974 Mehl was posthumously elected to the ANA Numismatic Hall of Fame.

Merkin, Lester: (1922-1992) A professional musician who entered the coin trade prior to 1958, when he became a full time dealer. Merkin conducted

32 auction sales from 1956 to 1976, many of which were catalogued by Walter Breen. Lester is remembered as a fine gentleman who brought a high degree of professionalism to his business.

Mid-American Rare Coin Auctions: Located in Lexington, KY, Jeff Garrett's firm was active in the coin auction business from 1985 to 1990 and handled many important properties. Jeff maintains his professional activity in direct sales today.

Mid-Continent Coins: Operated by Kansas City, MO, professional numismatist W. L. "Dutch" Rohning.

Milas, Edward: Proprietor of Rare Coin Company of America, known as Rarcoa, in Chicago. One of four auction firms involved in the joint "apostrophe" auction sales. Ed was on the spot when certain Morgan silver dollar hoards were dispersed years ago, and profited handsomely. Today he is active on an international basis and has business interests in America, Switzerland, and elsewhere. Over the years he has handled many important coins and collections and at one time served as president of the Professional Numismatists Guild.

Miracle Mile Coin Center: Los Angeles firm located on Wilshire Boulevard. Members of the firm regularly attend the Long Beach Numismatic Convention and other regional shows.

Mitkoff, William: Pittsfield, MA, professional numismatist specializing in choice United States coins and world bank notes.

Murch, Kenneth: Western dealer.

Nagle, Bill: Present day coin dealer, proprietor of W.J. Nagle, Inc., of New Jersey.

NASCA: The Numismatic Antiquarian Service Corporation of America was under the control of George and Douglas Ball with Herbert I. Melnick arranging most of the transactions. The guiding light in the organization of this firm was John J. Ford, Jr., although he remained in the background.

New England Rare Coin Auctions: The 1970s rare coin auction firm of James Halperin prior to his association with Steve Ivy in 1983.

New Netherlands Coin Co.: Established by Moritz Wormser in 1936, the firm became a major entity in the rare coin business after World War II, especially after John J. Ford, Jr., joined as an associate with Charles M. Wormser (Moritz's son). Its motto was "New York's Distinguished Numismatic Firm." Ford and the company pioneered the concept of well-researched catalogues beginning with the 1953 ANA Convention. The firm's catalogues also featured copy written by Walter Breen, Jon Hanson, and others. Many important collections and rarities were handled over the years from its location on the 4th floor at 1 West 47th Street, New York City, the same address used earlier by Wayte Raymond and the Scott Stamp & Coin Co.

Norman W. Pullen: Full time professional numismatist since 1959. Operates Norman W. Pullen, Inc. and Maine Gold and Silver in Portland, ME.

Nouhan, Dr. Joseph G.: Collector from St. Louis.

Numismatic Associates of New England. Located in Framingham, Massachusetts; a group of enthusiastic numismatists who later branched out to form other companies.

Numismatic Enterprises: Partnership of Abe Kosoff's son, Steve, and son-in-law, Mike Kliman. This California firm conducted several auction sales including two ANA convention sales.

Numismatic Gallery: New York City, later moved to Beverly Hills, CA. Operated by Abe Kosoff and Abner Kreisberg in the 1940s and 1950s. One of the best known firms of its era, the company handled numerous important properties including the marvelous F.C.C. Boyd Collection (billed as "The World's Greatest Collection"), the Adolphe Menjou

Collection, and many others. The company dissolved in 1954 after Abe Kosoff returned from the King Farouk sale in Cairo, and the partners each went their own successful ways.

Numismatics, Ltd.: Beverly Hills, CA, firm with Fred Weinberg, Fred Malone, Steve Gordon, and Harry Gordon as principals during the period when James Bennett Pryor was a client.

O'Carmony's Coins: Helen Carmony and her late husband Don were constant table holders at the Long Beach conventions and other shows. Their specialty was commemorative coinage, and they were instrumental in the success of Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins and the publication of *The Commemorative Trail*. Today, Helen continues her exhausting role with the Society and also finds time to serve on the Board of Governors of the American Numismatic Association.

Overton, Al C.: (1907-1972) Dealer and collector from Colorado specializing in early half dollars. Member of the 1971 Assay Commission. Author of *Early Half Dollar Die Varieties, 1794-1836*. A soft-spoken, well-liked gentleman, as an auctioneer he conducted occasional sales from 1940 to 1965 including two ANA convention auctions.

Paramount International Coin Corporation: This firm was initiated by Michael V. DiSalle (former governor of Ohio), Max Humbert (entrepreneur and numismatist formerly with Presidential Art Medals, Inc.), James Kelly (long-time rare coin dealer and compiler of the "Trends" section of *Coin World*), James Ruddy (Empire Coin Company), and Norman Wissinger (general counsel). Initially, Paramount went public offering 1,000 shares of stock at \$1,000 per share in 1964. Paramount acquired the business interests of James Kelly's World Numismatiques and of Empire Coin Company. Paramount would continue to be a major force in the rare coin hobby throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of four firms joining forces to conduct the "apostrophe" auctions. Did business from a former bank building in Englewood, OH; then at Buckingham Square, Dayton; then in two custom-built offices in Englewood. At one time employed 200. Later relocated to Florida and specialized primarily in modern world coin issues and sets.

Park Avenue Coin Center, Inc. No information obtained.

Parsons, Joseph: California dealer and former numismatist with Bowers and Ruddy Galleries. Known for his highly competent research and methodology. Contributor to the *Rare Coin Review*.

Pateras, Mr. No information obtained.

Pullen & Hanks: Partnership of Bill Pullen and Larry Hanks, which held several auctions of rare coins in the 1980s and handled numerous notable rarities. Today, each partner is the proprietor of his own business.

Quality Sales Corporation: The Beverly Hills, CA, partnership of Abner Kreisberg and Jerry Cohen, each listed above.

Randall, J. Colvin: Philadelphia collector and dealer. His collection was sold by Edward Cogan in 1878 with many pieces acquired by T. Harrison Garrett. Randall was a leading scholar of his time and is said to have ghost written John Haseltine's *Type Table*.

Rare Coin Investments of Ramsey: New Jersey rare coin firm conducted by Donald Hosier. Has handled many rarities.

Raymond, Wayte: (1886-1956) Dealer, publisher, numismatic connoisseur. Raymond's illustrious career included associations with Elmer Sears (The United States Coin Company), James G. Macallister (J.C. Morgenthau & Co.), and Scott Stamp & Coin Company. John J. Ford, Jr., well-known numismatist, remembers Raymond as his mentor. Raymond was instrumental in the production of National Coin Albums and wrote, or published, over 70 books or monographs, with his *magnum opus* being the

Standard Catalogue of U.S. Coins. He sponsored the young Walter Breen in his research in the National Archives.

Reithe, Robert: Main Line Coin of Pennsylvania.

Renrob: Coin dealership of the late Bob Rose of New Jersey (firm name comprised of Robert and his wife Renée), who met with an unfortunate fate in 1995. Bob was a person who one could always look forward to seeing. He will be dearly missed by all his friends.

Rettew, Joel: Coin dealer in Newport Beach, CA. Operated Downey Coin Center and Numismatic Financial Corporation in Downey, CA. Currently operates Joel D. Rettew & Son.

Rodgers, George W. ("Hank"): Professional numismatist from Oklahoma who advertised his specialty as "truly choice type material." Hank mainly displayed at coin shows and is remembered for having a case with coins few in number but high in quality.

Rossfield, Robert: Dealer from Tampa, FL, and former partner in The Gilde Shop.

Rush, George: No information located.

Scott, Joseph: Coin, stamp, and antique dealer in Sarasota, FL.

Simons, Mulford B., Jr.: Operated the Penn Valley Coin Shop, Inc., during the 1970s before his untimely death due to circumstances beyond his control. A kind person who conducted his business in a first-class manner and who was much admired in the hobby.

Stack's: This New York City firm has conducted coin auctions since 1935. Founded by Morton and Joseph B. Stack; later operated by their three sons, Norman, Benjamin, and Harvey. One of four firms joining forces to conduct the "apostrophe" auctions beginning in 1979. Today, Harvey Stack, his son Larry, and daughter Susan are the principals. The company has handled many important collections and rarities.

Superior Galleries: Superior Coin and Stamp Company and Superior Galleries held coin auctions from the early 1970s to the early 1990s and handled numerous important properties. One of four firms joining forces to conduct the "apostrophe" auctions. Today, a firm of the same name, but with no direct corporate connection, is operated under affiliation with A-Mark. Principals include Mark, Larry, and Ira Goldberg.

Swiatek, Anthony: Author and professional numismatist in New York. Past president of the Society for U.S. Commemorative Coins. An expert in the field of commemorative coins, Swiatek co-authored, with Walter Breen, *The Encyclopedia of United States Silver and Gold Commemorative Coins*. Currently vice president of the American Numismatic Association.

Terranova, Anthony: Dealer to the trade and selected clients. He formed his own company in New York in 1978 after working for Neil Berman from 1975. "Tony" specializes in rare and historic coinage and has handled many important properties.

Tom's Coins: Tom McAfee, Florida and other locations.

Weinberg, Fred: Currently proprietor of Fred Weinberg & Co. See also Numismatics, Ltd.

Western Numismatics: Robert Hughes was the coin trader in the 1970s for this subsidiary of A-Mark, Inc. Located in California.

Wexler's: Eastern dealer.

Whitlow, Larry: A part time coin dealer from 1957 to 1963 and a full time numismatist since then. Larry formerly operated the Beverly Hills Coin Shop of Chicago and currently is the proprietor of Larry Whitlow, Ltd., and Galleria Unique.

Zearing, Mr.: No information located.

Individuals and Firms

The following sales are among those from which James Bennett Pryor is known to have obtained coins directly or indirectly. In many if not most instances these sales had other important coins in other series as well, but we take note of only the half dollars here.

Akers, David: Auction '89. Joint venture of David Akers, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Galleries. Included high grade half dollars.

American Auction Association: May 18-19, 1973. Terrell Collection. Included a superb collection of half dollars by date and variety.

Auction '79: July 26-27, 1979. The first joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp & Coin Co. Half dollar highlights included a Proof 1846, a gem 1878-CC, and the 1838-O from the Atwater Collection, the presently offered specimen.

Auction '80: August 14-15, 1980. Joint venture as preceding. Among half dollars were a superb 1878-S, two Proof 1836 Reeded Edge issues, a Proof 1829, and several gem Liberty Seated issues.

Auction '81: July 23-24, 1981. Joint venture as preceding. Half dollars in the sale included a Proof 1841 and a Mint State 1892-O Micro O.

Auction '85: July 26-27, 1985. Joint venture as preceding. Half dollars in the sale included gem examples of 1795, 1806, 1866-S No Motto, and 1873-S, a Proof 1836 Reeded Edge and a specimen 1855-O.

Auction '89: July 7-8, 1989. Joint venture as preceding. Half dollars included a gem 1839-O, a Proof 1855/4, and two gem 1921-S Liberty Walking issues, along with the Larry Whitlow collection of Liberty Walking half dollars.

Bangs & Co.: March 23-24, 1881. Ed. Frossard's 13th sale including nice half dollars.

Bowers & Merena Galleries: January 23-25, 1986. Ezra Cole Collection. Included many high quality half dollars.

Bowers & Merena Galleries: November 14-15, 1988. Norweb Collection, part III. The third of three sales of this incomparable collection. This sale featured memorable quality half dollars along with other high grade American coinage from a cabinet begun in the 19th century.

Bowers & Merena Galleries: January 26-28, 1989. Byron F. Johnson Collection. Included a selection of attractive half dollars. Among these was an example of the 1861-O half dollar with cracked obverse, known to have been struck under Confederate control of the New Orleans Mint. The identical coin is offered as part of the James Bennett Pryor Collection. Among later half dollars is a pair of Choice to Gem 1921-S Liberty Walking issues.

Bowers & Merena Galleries: June 11-12, 1989. Brooks Collection. A delightful sale with the catalog full of many treasures including important half dollars.

Bowers & Ruddy Galleries: May 5-6, 1977. Getty Collection. The sale's main event was a superb collection of Capped Bust half dollars with just over 400 lots attributed to Overton numbers.

Bowers & Ruddy Galleries: December 8-9, 1977. Donald Herdman and Fairfield Collections.

Bowers & Ruddy Galleries: The Garrett Collection. This cabinet, which realized a world's record \$25 million, was formed over many years beginning in the 1860s and continuing to circa 1940. T. Harrison Garrett, Robert Garrett, and Jolin Work Garrett each made additions to the

collection with a keen eye to quality. Finally bequeathed to The Johns Hopkins University which sold most of the collection through Bowers and Ruddy Galleries over four sales from 1979 to 1981.

Chapman Brothers: December 15-16, 1885. The E. T. Wright and C. R. Walker Collections. Rated "B" by John W. Adams for early silver, this was one of the Chapmans routine sales with nothing particularly special.

Elder, Thomas: May 16-19, 1923. Collections of B. P. Wright, J. Sanford Saltus, and Buckholts. Rated "A" overall by John Adams, this sale was particularly strong in several areas. The offering of an 1838-O half dollar highlighted the denomination.

Frossard, Ed.: Bangs & Co., March 23-24, 1881. Ed. Frossard's 13th sale including nice half dollars.

Heritage Galleries: February 21-23, 1985. ANA Midwinter Convention sale. Included were many quality Liberty Seated and modern coins.

Heritage Galleries: August 20-24, 1985. ANA Convention sale. Half dollar collectors had a nice selection from early pieces through Liberty Walking issues. A group of pattern coins began with an obverse die trial for the 1806 half dollar coin.

Heritage Galleries: July 20-23, 1988. ANA Convention sale. An attractive run of choice Mint State half dollars crossed the auction block.

Ivy, Steve: August 18-21, 1980. ANA Convention sale. Included a number of choice half dollars.

Ivy, Steve: May 30-June 1, 1983. Wallace Ralston Collection. Many nice half dollars were included.

Ivy, Steve: August 11-14, 1983. Charmont Collection. Included quality half dollars.

Hollinbeck-Kagin: November 2-3, 1973. Sale of the 70's, in conjunction with the Middle Atlantic Numismatic Association convention. Many half dollars were included.

Kagin's: August 23-27, 1977. ANA Convention sale. Session 2 included a fine offering of half dollars.

Kagin's: January 26-27, 1979. The 24th NASC Convention sale. Included quality half dollars.

Mehl, B. Max: November 30, 1954. Including material from L. W. Hoffecker of commemorative fame. The next to last sale for Mehl.

Merkin, Lester: February 12, 1972. The sale included gem Capped Bust half dollars.

Mid-American: February 15-16, 1985. The Capitol City Sale with the collection of Dr. Jasper L. Robertson. Half dollar collectors were provided a nice selection from early pieces to modern.

Mid-American: September 2-3, 1988. The 1988 Peach State Sale. Included a number of high-quality half dollars.

NASCA: July 16-17, 1981. The Providence Collection. Included were approximately 40 nice Uncirculated Capped Bust half dollars.

NASCA: December 7-10, 1981. Stanley Gibbons Collection, part II. Included quality half dollars.

New England Rare Coin Auctions: March 26-27, 1976. The Bicentennial Sale, Part I. Included quality half dollars.

New England Rare Coin Auctions: July 23-24, 1976. The Bicentennial Sale, Part II. Included a gem 1873-S half dollar.

New England Rare Coin Auctions: May 19-20, 1978. The Prudential sale. Included a number of quality half dollars.

- Overton, Al C.: April 3, 1959. The Al C. Overton Collection. This sale featured 450 half dollar lots from 1794-1891 with the majority either Uncirculated or Proof. From a contemporary advertisement: "For the first time in any auction sale catalog we know of, The Bust type half dollars 1794-1836, will include a technical description of over 120 varieties not now listed in Beistle's book, and will include our own reference numbers on them." Although it was not part of the sale, the cover featured an illustration of the 1817/4 half dollar.
- Paramount International Coin Corporation: Auction '79. Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.
- Paramount International Coin Corporation: Auction '80. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Paramount International Coin Corporation: Auction '81. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Paramount International Coin Corporation: Auction '85. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Pullen and Hanks: May 1-2, 1981. The Texas Numismatic Association Convention sale. From the introduction to the catalog: "A good portion of the choice U.S. material comes from the Hope Ranch Collection which was assembled from 1863 to 1908. This outstanding collection was stored in trust from 1908 until it was consigned to this sale. Most of the items from this collection will be accompanied by the original envelopes that housed them."
- Quality Sales Corporation: November 8-10, 1976. Carl S. Carlson and Arthur H. Shipkey Collections. The sale included 286 attributed half dollars.
- Quality Sales Corporation: October 4-6, 1979. The Herbert M. Bergen Collection. Included many outstanding half dollars among which were many that had been displayed at the museum in the old (opened in 1873) San Francisco Mint.
- Quality Sales Corporation: November 13-14, 1981. Windsor Collection. Included high quality half dollars.
- Rarcoa: Auction '79. Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.
- Rarcoa: Auction '80. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Rarcoa: Auction '81. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Rarcoa: Auction '85. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Rarcoa: Auction '89. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Raymond, Wayte: February 18, 1947. An important sale for the half dollar enthusiast including pedigreed pieces, Mint State 1795 and 1802, and "Proof" 1817/3, 1821, and 1829.
- Stack's: November 11-12, 1955. The Farish Baldenhofer Collection. An 1838-O is of importance to the present discussion.
- Stack's: March 21-22, 1958. Julius Windner Collection. The catalogue included a nice selection of half dollars from a New Jersey collection among which were Mint State examples of most Capped Bust half dollars from 1808 through 1838.
- Stack's: December 6, 1958. Frank H. Chase Collection. Included a Proof 1856 half dollar.
- Stack's: April 26-29, 1962. R.E. Cox, Jr. Collection. A highly important, memorable sale in many areas including a superb cabinet of half dollars among which were great rarities as well as important varieties. Notable coins included 1796, 1797, 1838-O, 1847/46, 1853-O without arrows and rays, etc.
- Stack's: May 3-4, 1963. Samuel W. Wolfson Collection, Part II. A highly important sale of half dollars including many memorable Liberty Seated coins and sets of Barber, Liberty Walking, and commemorative halves.
- Stack's: December 2-3, 1966. Maurice Bauman Collection featuring an outstanding collection of half dollars.
- Stack's: May 4-6, 1972. Arthur B. Stewart Estate. Included many important half dollars.
- Stack's: May 23-25, 1973. Charles H. Patten Collection of U.S. half dollars. Included rarities and high-quality coins of such varieties as 1796, 1797, 1878-CC, and 1878-S.
- Stack's: August 28-29, 1973. Reed Hawn Collection. Featuring one of the finest and most complete collections of half dollars, virtually all brilliant Uncirculated or Proof. Included was the Atwater specimen of the 1838-O half dollar, the identical coin offered in the present sale.
- Stack's: March 13-15, 1975. James A. Stack Collection. Among half dollars, highlights included an 1807 described as Proof, an 1838-O, and Uncirculated examples of 1871-CC, 1872-CC, and 1873-CC No Arrows.
- Stack's: October 25, 1975. Dr. E. Yale Clarke Collection. Half dollars included two Mint State 1794 issues, along with Mint State or Proof examples of 1796, 1838-O, 1847/6, 1878-S, 1892-O micro O, and an example of the 1853-O No Arrows grading Fine.
- Stack's: December 5-6, 1975. Dalton Family Collection. This offering was quite strong in half dollars including choice Capped Bust and Liberty Seated issues along with complete collections of Barber and Liberty Walking issues.
- Stack's: December 2-3, 1977. Dr. Joseph G. Nouhan Collection. A basic offering of average material from various consignors. The Nouhan consignment included a nice offering of Seated half dollars.
- Stack's: March 17-18, 1978. The Fraser Collection. Featured was a nice consignment of Capped Bust and Liberty Seated half dollars with most being Uncirculated.
- Stack's: April 11-12, 1978. The Spring sale. The sale included a nice selection of choice early coinage.
- Stack's: March 17, 1979. Included a number of high quality half dollars.
- Stack's: Auction '79. Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.
- Stack's: Auction '80. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.
- Stack's: March 10-12, 1981. Public Auction Sale. Included interesting half dollars.
- Stack's: Auction '81. Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.
- Stack's: October 22-23, 1981. Harold S. Bareford Collection. Included high quality half dollars.
- Stack's: February 10-13, 1982. Ellis H. Robison Collection. Included a magnificent collection of half dollars highlighted by an 1838-O.
- Stack's: September 14, 1983. Dr. George J. Oviedo, Jr. Collection. Included many choice half dollars from 1794 onward, a memorable offering.
- Stack's: March 21-22, 1984. John Glenn Halsell, Jr. Collection. Although not

complete by any means, the Halsell Collection of half dollars consisted of a large number of coins of impeccable quality. Many of the Halsell coins are pedigreed to the same sales from which James Bennett Pryor acquired a number of his coins.

Stack's: Auction '85: Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.

Stack's: October 22, 1985. The Jimmy Hayes Collection of United States Silver Coins. Included important half dollar "types" of high quality.

Stack's: Auction '89. Joint venture of David Akers, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Galleries. Included high quality half dollars.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: February 10-12, 1975. Ruby Collection, part III. Featured an extensive offering of half dollars.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: August 19-23, 1975. ANA Convention sale. Notable among the consignments was the H. Glassenberg collection of half dollars, several which were purchased by James Bennett Pryor.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: February 16-18, 1976. Fred Neggen Collection.. Half dollars included a brief offering of Capped Bust and Liberty Seated issues.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: October 3-4, 1978. The California sale. Included high quality half dollars.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: January 29-31, 1979. Madison Estate sale. This sale featured a selection of over 90 Capped Bust and Reeded Edge half dollars most of which were Mint State in preservation. Several of these were acquired by James Bennett Pryor for his collection.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: Auction '79. Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: Auction '80. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: Auction '81. Joint venture as preceding. Included high quality half dollars.

Superior Galleries: January 28-30, 1985. Dr. Jerry Buss Collection. Included many outstanding half dollars as part of a superb holding of United States coins.

Superior Stamp and Coin Co.: Auction '85: Joint venture of Paramount International Coin Corporation, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Included high quality half dollars.

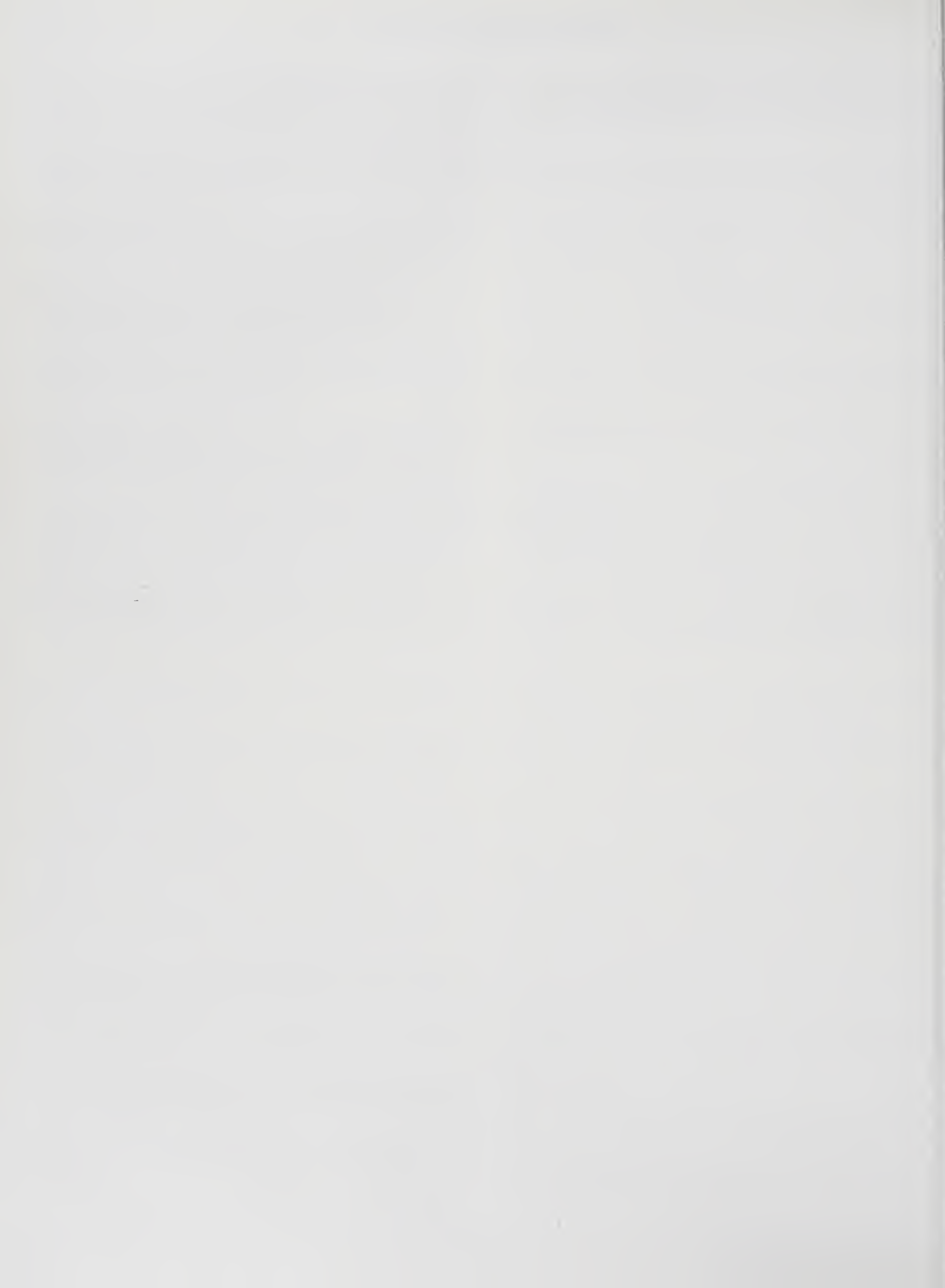
Superior Galleries: January 27-28, 1986. Collections of Hoagy Carmichael and Wayne Miller. Half dollar collectors were delighted to bid on a wide spectrum of choice examples, including a Proof 1836 50/00 C. variety.

Superior Galleries: May 31-June 2, 1987. The Buddy Ebsen Collection. Included an impressive consignment of early and Liberty Seated half dollars.

Superior Galleries: January 30-February 2, 1988. The A. Bernard Shore Collection. Half dollar collectors had the opportunity to compete for many Mint State coins among which were the following issues: 1797, 1807 Draped Bust (2), 1845, 1853-O (2), 1857-S, 1858-S, 1873-CC Arrows, and many others.

Superior Galleries: January 29-31, 1989.. Half dollar collectors were delighted to find a nice selection of Capped Bust and Liberty Seated issues in Mint State.

Superior Galleries: Auction '89. Joint venture of David Akers, Rarcoa, Stack's, and Superior Galleries. Included high quality half dollars.





WHEN GREAT
COLLECTIONS ARE SOLD,
BOWERS AND MERENA
SELLS THEM.



AUCTIONS BY BOWERS AND MERENA, INC.

Box 1224 • Wolfeboro, NH 03894

Toll-Free: 800-458-4646 • Fax: 603-569-5319 • In NH: 569-5095